

Among this week's contributors

JOHN BAINES is Professor of Egyptology at the University of Oxford.

MAURICE BEESFORD is Professor of Economic History at the University of Leeds.

TINA BROWN's *Life as a Party* will be reviewed in a future issue of the TLS.

VICTORIA CHICK is the author of *Macroeconomics After Keynes: A Reconsideration of the General Theory*, 1983.

JOHN DUNN is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.

JAMES FENTON's collections of poems include *The Memory of War*, 1982; his *Children in Exile* will be published shortly.

H. S. FERNS's autobiography, *Reading from Left to Right: One man's political history*, was published earlier this year.

MARGARET FORSTER's *Significant Sisters: a history of active feminism 1830-1940* is to be published next year.

JANE GLOVER is the author of *Covall*, 1978.

CHRISTOPHER HILL's most recent book is *Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution*, 1980.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS is Washington Correspondent for *The Nation*.

EMRYS JONES is the author of *The Origins of Shakespeare*, 1977.

GAVIN KENNEDY is Senior Lecturer in Economics at the University of Strathclyde.

ERIC KOHN is an antiquarian bookseller in London.

SIR EOMUNO LEACH's *Structuralist Interpretations of Biblical Myth* was published earlier this year.

DAVID M. LOADE's most recent works are *The Reign of Mary Tudor and Politics and the Nation, 1450-1600*, both 1979.

EDNA LONLEY is editor of *A Language not to be Betrayed: Selected prose of Edward Thomas*, 1981.

STEPHEN MEDCALF is a Reader in English at the University of Sussex.

WILFRIED MELLERS's most recent book is *Beethoven and the Voice of God*, 1983.

JOHN MILNER's *Vladimir Totin and the Russian Avant-Garde* was published earlier this year.

MICHAEL NEVE is a lecturer in the History of Medicine at University College London.

EDWARD NORMAN is the author of *Church and Society in England 1770-1970*, 1976.

JOHN NORTH is Professor of the History of Science at the University of Groningen.

VIVIAN NUTTON is the editor of *Galen Problems and Prospects*, 1981.

J. G. A. Pocock is Professor of History at Johns Hopkins University, and is Director of the Folger Center for the History of British Political Thought.

L. R. Poos is a Fellow of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

ROY PORTER's most recent book is *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 1982.

DAVID ROSANO is Chairman of the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University.

HANS SINGER is Emeritus Professor at Sussex University and Professional Fellow of the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex.

HILARY SPURLINO's *Secrets of a Woman's Heart: The Later Life of Ivy Compton-Burnett 1920-1969* will be published next year.

LAURENCE WHITEHEAD is a Fellow in Politics at Nuffield College, Oxford.

J. M. ZIMAN's most recent book is *Puzzles, Problems and Enigmas*, 1981.

Information, please

G. A. M., author of *Six Satires*, published by Harold Munro's Poetry Bookshop in 1919 with decorations by Paul Nash: identity sought of G. A. M.; for a bibliography of the publications of the Poetry Bookshop.

J. Howard Woolmer. Revere, Pennsylvania 18953.

Michael MacDonagh (1860-1946), author of *In London during the Great War* (1935); current holder of copyright in this work sought.

Stuart Sillars. 58 Morgan Crescent, Theydon Bois, Epping, Essex CM16 7DX.

Pauline Smith (1882-1959), South African-born short-story writer and novelist, friend of Arnold Bennett, Frank Swinnerton, Winifred Holtby, Ethelreda Lewis, Sarah Gertrude Millin, Emily Townshend: photographs, personal recollections, biographical information about her life in Europe, and particularly letters; for a forthcoming volume of correspondence with biographical introduction.

Dorothy Driver. English Department, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, 7700 Cape, South Africa.

Doris Lessing: I have been asked to edit a British issue of the *Doris Lessing Newsletter*, and would welcome contributions.

A. J. Gurr. Department of English, University of Reading, Whiteknights, Reading RG6 2AA.

Stephen Crane (1871-1900), author of *The Red Badge of Courage*, who lived intermittently in England during the last three years of his life: letters from or to Stephen or Crane; for a new edition of the correspondence.

Stanley Wertheim. 180 Cnhrini Boulevard, New York, NY 10033.

John Davidson (1857-1909): information about MSS collections other than the pre-1975 acquisitions in the following libraries: British Library, Columbia University, Henry E. Huntington, University of Illinois, University of Leeds, National Library of Scotland, New York Public Library, Princeton University, Yale University; for a study.

Mary O'Connor. 133 Grace Street, Toronto, Ontario M6J 2S6, Canada.

Major-General Eric Darnley-Saunders (later Dorman-O'Gowan) (185-1969): personal or military reminiscences or relevant correspondence covering any part of his life; for a commissioned biography.

Levinna Greene. Ticknock House, Ticknock, Salford, Co Dublin, Irish Republic.

Barbara Pym: personal recollections and correspondence not included in the Bodleian collection; for a critical biography.

Constance Mallory. English Department, University of California, Davis, California 95616.

LIBRARIANS



Teesside Polytechnic

Deputy Librarian

A Deputy Librarian is required for the Library of Teesside Polytechnic. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library, including the acquisition, organisation, and maintenance of the collection. The post offers an interesting and stimulating work with good opportunities of career development. Salary: Principal Librarian - £13,838-£16,744. The conditions of service for this post are those prescribed by the National Joint Council for Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical Services. Further details and application forms are available from: The Personnel Section, Teesside Polytechnic, Borough Road, Cleveland TS1 3BA. Tel: Middlesbrough (0542) 218121, Ext. 4114. Closing date: 30th November, 1983. (4278)

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FELLOWSHIPS

University of Oxford Magdalen College

The College proposes to elect a non-stipendiary Visiting Fellow or Fellows for the academic year 1984/5. A Visiting Fellowship is intended to offer a scholar an opportunity to pursue research in the College. It is available for one or two years. Further details are available from the Clerk of the College, Magdalen College, Oxford. L131

EXHIBITIONS

PERIOD 30 SEPTEMBER - 30 NOVEMBER 1983. The exhibition will be held in the main hall of the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine. The exhibition will be open to the public from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm. Admission: £2.50. Tel: Portsmouth (0705) 511111.

PERSONAL

IMMEDIATE ADVANCES. £100 to £200. Various loans available. Tel: Portsmouth (0705) 511111.

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS. Translation, editing, and proofreading. Tel: Portsmouth (0705) 511111.

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Working with the text. The text is a collection of essays on the history of the book. The text is available in paperback. Tel: Portsmouth (0705) 511111.

NEW BOOKS

RETURN. The Story of the Return. Tel: Portsmouth (0705) 511111.

ON TUCKER. Goodly Heritage. Tel: Portsmouth (0705) 511111.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

OXFORD THEATRE GROUP. Tel: Portsmouth (0705) 511111.

BOOKS & PRINTS

PICKERING & CHATTO LTD. Antiquarian Booksellers.

Juliana Berners: A Treatise of Fysshynge with an Angle. Reprinted from the Book of St. Albans. London, William Pickering, 1827 \$200. Tel: Portsmouth (0705) 511111.

URQUHART HYDRATICS

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TLS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

FRIDAY • 28 OCTOBER 1983 • No 4,204 • 60p

Earl Warren - Constitution and conscience

'Kissinger: The Price of Power'

H. C. Longuet-Higgins on computer-worship



Headpiece to "Principles of Jurisprudence", a wood engraving by Georges Rouault from his Passion, which was first published in 1939, reissued with an introduction by Timothy Mitchell (The Lilly Library of Indiana University, Bloomington; with Dover Publications, 76pp with 99 illustrations, 17 in colour, distributed in Britain by Constable. £7.20. 0-486-24270-2).

Fiction: J. P. Donleavy, Lawrence Durrell, Brian Moore
The music of twentieth-century America
Lives: Velázquez, Buckminster Fuller
Electricity and the entrepreneur
David Edgar's 'Maydays'; Poetry: Carol Rumens,
Paul Theroux's travels Paul Muldoon
Eric Hobsbawm on Europe and non-Europe in history

ELIZABETH R

Elizabeth Longford

The distinguished historical biographer, Elizabeth Longford, presents a completely fresh portrait of the Queen. Full of lively anecdotes and much new information, it comes as close as possible to being an authorized biography. *The Times* £10.95

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A major new work by England's foremost social historian. Lavishly illustrated throughout, it is 'judicious and unimpaired... offering an extraordinarily wide perspective.' *Guardian*. 'This is a remarkable book that bears the stamp of its exceptional author.' *The Times* £11.95

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A sensitive portrayal of the brilliant public life and complex personal life of Vita Sackville-West. 'Superb... masterly... much more than just a record of events, but an opening-up of understanding and experience.' *The Times* £12.50

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John Alsborg

This radical critique of art from 1800 to 1950 draws copiously on the writings of artists and philosophers. £12.50

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Elizabeth Hardwick

Whether discussing the theatre, politics, Paris or New York, the essays collectively paint the intellectual self-portrait of a subtle, lucid mind that never gives or takes easy answers and ranges very widely in its terms of reference. *Guardian* £8.95

THE ROSENBERG FILE

A Search for Truth

A reappraisal of one of America's greatest spy trials and a gripping study of guilt and innocence. £16.50

IN BREACH OF PROMISE

Five Men who Shaped a Generation

John Vazey

A perceptive examination of the lives of Hugh Gaitskell, Iain Macleod, Anthony Crosland, Edward Boyle and Richard Titmuss. £9.95

WOMEN'S CHOICES

The Philosophical Problems of Feminism

Mary Midgley & Judith Hughes

Provides just the ammunition you'll need to argue your way fruitfully through the 'Eighties'. *Cosmopolitan* Cased £12.95 Paper £6.95

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Rudolf Kippenhahn

A witty and humorous biography of the stars written for both the professional and general reader. £15.00

THE RISE OF THE COMPUTER STATE

David Brunnham

Shows how computers are changing the way we live. 'Astute yet thoughtful book.' *Washington Post* £10.95

THE TRUTH THAT KILLED

Georgi Markov

The notorious murder of Bulgaria's 'Solitary Man'. 'Anyone here in the West who wants to get the inside story on the Communists should read this testimony, which is presented in the level of first.' *Sunday Telegraph* £9.95

BRECHT

Ronald Hayman

Well written, thoroughly researched, very readable and most readable. *Sunday Telegraph* Cased £18.80 Paper £8.95

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX

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BANTON, MICHAEL	<i>Racism and Ethnic Competition</i> [Kenneth Kirkwood]
BELL, MICHAEL	<i>The Sentiment of Reality: Truth of feeling in the European novel</i> [Iain McGilchrist]
BORN, ANNE	<i>South Devon</i> [Patricia Beer]
BURTON, CINOY, and ANNE PRICE	<i>Survival: South Atlantic</i> [Nicholas Shakespeare]
COADNER, MICHAEL (Editor)	<i>The Plays of Sir George Etherege</i> [Ian Donaldson]
DONALDSON, GORDON	<i>All the Queen's Men: Power and politics in Mary Stewart's Scotland</i> [Jenny Wormald]
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FULLER, R. BUCKMINSTER	<i>Critical Path</i> [P. B. Checkland]
FROST, DAVID L. (Editor)	<i>The Selected Plays of Thomas Middleton</i> [Ian Donaldson]
GERBER, LANE A.	<i>Married to their Careers: Career and family dilemmas in doctors' lives</i> [Bruce Hepburn]
GIBSON, COLIN (Editor)	<i>The Selected Plays of Philip Massinger</i> [Ian Donaldson]
HAMM, CHARLES	<i>Music in the New World</i> [Peter Dickinson]
HANSON, WILLIAM S., and GORDON S. MAXWELL	<i>Rome's North West Frontier: The Antonine Wall</i> [Volerie Maxfield]
HARRIS, DANIEL A.	<i>Inspirations Unblended: The "Terrible Sonnets" of Gerard Manley Hopkins</i> [Roger Moss]
HARRIS, DANIEL A.	<i>Voltaire's "Zola"</i> [Michael Jaffe]
HAZARDINE, PETER	<i>Rapines of the Deep</i> [Stephen Pickles]
HENDERSON, ANTHONY G. (Editor)	<i>The Comedies of William Congreve</i> [Ian Donaldson]
HERSH, SEYMOUR M.	<i>Kissinger: The price of power</i> [Adam Watson]
HILL, CHRISTOPHER R.	<i>Change in South Africa: Blind alleys or new directions?</i> [Lucy Mair]
HILLARY, JOHN	<i>Journey Home</i> [Adam Nicolson]
HOLLAND, PETER (Editor)	<i>The Plays of William Wycheley</i> [Ian Donaldson]
HUGHES, THOMAS P.	<i>Networks of Power: Electrification in western society, 1880-1930</i> [P. V. Donckwerts]
JOHNS, CATHERINE, and TIMOTHY POTTER	<i>The Thetford Treasure: Roman Jewellery and silver</i> [Anthony King]
KINGTON, EUGENE R.	<i>The Perception of Poetry</i> [Katerina Arthur]
LATTIMORE, RICHARD (Translator)	<i>Acts and Letters of the Apostles</i> [Michael Goulder]
LENER, LAURANCE	<i>Reconstructing Literature</i> [Imre Solusinsky]
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MACBETH, GEORGE	<i>Anna's Book</i> [Briote Morton]
MCLANN, F. J.	<i>The Jacobite Army in England 1745: The final campaign</i> [John Childs]
MARS-JONES, ADAM (Editor)	<i>Mae West Is Dead: Recent Lesbian and Gay Fiction</i> [Stephen Pickles]
MOORE, BRIAN	<i>Cold Heaven</i> [Patricia Craig]
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NONWEILER, BARRY	<i>Thine Other Realm of Freedom</i> [Stephen Pickles]
PARFITT, GEORGE (Editor)	<i>The Plays of Cyril Tourneur</i> [Ian Donaldson]
RHOADS, ANTHONY	<i>The Power of Rome in the Twentieth Century</i> [Brian Fothergill]
ROBERTSON, C. J. A.	<i>The Origins of the Scottish Railway System 1722-1844</i> [Bruce Lenman]
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COMMENTARY

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BIOGRAPHY

BERNARD SCHWARTZ

Super Chief: Earl Warren and His Supreme Court - A Judicial Biography
New York University Press.
\$26.00
0847 7825 9

The record of Earl Warren's Supreme Court from 1954 to 1968 was shorty summarized by Representative George G. Andrews of Alabama. "They put the Negroes in the schools," he said, "and drove Gnd out." Congressman Mendel Rivers filled out the picture in more detail. The justices of the Warren Court were "a bold, audacious, atheistic, sacrilegious and unpredictable group of uncontrolled despots, giving aid and comfort to Moscow." Richard Nixon - as perhaps the lawyer - was more restrained. The Court, to his mind, had "weakened the peace forces and strengthened the criminal forces" in American society, and it was indignantly appraised of the need for strict construction of the federal constitution.

Other descriptions of the Court's work from a different ideological stance are of course available. It might be said, for example, that the Court compelled the racial integration of the Nation's schools and public facilities and that they upheld the rights of the socially deprived, besides maintaining the Founding Fathers' prudent separation of Church and State. In addition they might be complimented for discovering behind the broad philosophy of the Bill of Rights hidden unrevealed entitlements of the citizen to privacy, travel, passport, contraceptive advice and sexually explicit reading matter. Truth, as always, has many faces.

On the theoretical plane (though it was not one to which Earl Warren naturally gravitated) the Court was for long divided on one of the major continuing questions of constitutional government, namely the contest between the claims of two styles of judicial behaviour, often dubbed "activism" and "restraint". The temperature of the contest is at its hottest where judges, as in the United States, have the power to quash and nullify acts of notional or local legislative bodies. The question can be posed in this way: should the considered decisions of democratically elected bodies be upheld when judges, who may doubt their conformity with constitutional guarantees, perceive that they rest upon an intelligible legislative policy that is not completely arbitrary? Or should judges weigh for themselves the compelling claims of the Constitution and the legislative policy, subjecting the purposes of the legislature to rigorous scrutiny and upholding decisions that impinge upon constitutional guarantees only when convinced that they rest upon a compelling legislative purpose?

Bernard Schwartz has chronicled in upwards of 800 pages a now-by-lavish account of these competing strategies, and some complicating tactics, in the Court's business during the fifteen terms that Warren presided over it. It is sild meat for those that have the digestion for it. The materials for such an account are of course more abundantly available in the United States than in Britain, where scholars are unlikely to be given judges' notes and draft opinions, and where the higher judiciary are not supplied with law-clerks who on retirement are prepared to talk at length about their employers and about the opinions that they have in whole or part drafted for them. Professor Schwartz has interviewed thirty former law-clerks of the Chief Justice and all but one of the surviving members of the Warren Court, as well as using the papers of Burton, Frankfurter, Black, Douglas, Clark and Warren himself. What emerges is as much a biography of the Court as of its leader. In each term the Court's major cases are dissected and the developing opinions, concurrences and dissents plotted. The minor squabbles, flatteries, bargains and tantrums are displayed in all their now unsurprising detail. Warren is the focus, but Frankfurter and Black loom very large (particularly in the tantrum stakes).

Warren's first act of judicial statesmanship was to engineer a unanimous decision in the 1954 *Brown* case holding racial segregation in public education to be a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment equal protection requirement. In what Schwartz calls "the most severely fractured Supreme Court in history" that was a considerable stroke. Perhaps it can be accounted for by the fact that *Brown* raised different issues from that which often separated Justice Frankfurter from the so-called liberal activists. The fracture was severe enough. In the war years Frankfurter dubbed Black and Douglas the "Axis".

Conscience of the Constitution

Geoffrey Marshall

Douglas, he wrote to Judge Learned Hand in 1954, "is the most cynical, shamelessly immoral character I've ever known". He and "Hill-Billy Hugo" Black were "frankly not judges at all". Frankfurter in turn was, in Justice Potter Stewart's eye, "as fickle as a high-school girl". Douglas's phrase was "that little S.O.B."

Frankfurter's alleged fickleness was shown in his early and later thoughts on the Chief Justice. When soliciting his support immediately after Warren's appointment he had used extravagant language about his judicial capacities, but when Warren failed to take in the Frankfurterian gospel of judicial restraint and disengagement set in. The decision in *Brown* also soured relations between Warren and Eisenhower on both sides. Warren blamed Eisenhower for his lack of support and executive implementation of the desegregation decisions. Eisenhower in turn used Douglas-like epithets about the "former Governor of California, reportedly coming later to say that Warren's appointment was the biggest mistake of his career. (Inspection, incidentally, of Warren's record as a politician and as a state prosecutor might have given some early warning of his marked liberal tendencies in social and economic matters, and in relation to the rights of criminal defendants.)

From Frankfurter's viewpoint Warren's decision-making was unprincipled and "result-oriented". Potter Stewart later thought the same. "If the Chief Justice can see some issue that involves widows, orphans or the underprivileged," he wrote, "he's going to come down on that side." Other areas in which Warren might be deflected from going with the liberal activists were those that involved threats to decency or the family. So in *Roth v. US* in 1957 Warren, unlike Black and Douglas, subscribed to the view that "obscenity is not within the area of constitutionally protected speech or press" and voted to confirm a state conviction. In *Wyatt v. United States* he dissented from a majority of the Court, who were willing to find an exception to the rule against compelling a wife to testify against her husband. In *Alford v. Alford* he was also in a conference minority on the issue of a six-week residential requirement for the majority thought the disputed divorce in the Virgin Islands. Whilst legislation merely a matter of the state defining its own domicile requirement Warren spoke of "the place of the

family in our civilization" and argued that a state ought not to be allowed to dissolve the marriages of citizens of other states via consensual divorce laws.

The journalistic view of Warren (expressed by James Reston in the *New York Times* in 1956) was that he had joined the liberal wing of the Court and become "a whole-hearted advocate of activism". When Brennan joined the Court, what *Time* magazine called BBD and W (Black, Brennan, Douglas and Warren) were in some cases able to recruit Justice Tom Clark, and the conservatives, so called, seemed outnumbered. Beyond doubt the tensions on the Court were significantly lessened with the retirement of Mr Justice Frankfurter, whose departure must have brought about sighs of relief on all sides. Frankfurter's persistent professional advocacy of the restraint philosophy had set him at odds with those of his colleagues who, on his view, made humanity the test of constitutionality. He was beyond question the oldest jurist on the Court, but he was also didactic, self-important and given in private to unmeasured invective.

From the early 1960s there developed a further and significant split between Justice Hugo Black and some of his former co-adjutors. Black's liberal activism in some areas of civil liberties now turned out to be compatible with judicial caution in others. The peculiar liberalism that had led him to interpret the First Amendment free speech guarantee in an absolute way, so as to tolerate no state restriction of speech or writing, also made him refuse to extend its language. So in *Addley v. Florida* in 1966 and in similar public order cases he would not treat street demonstrations and protest marches as extended instances of the exercise of free speech rights. Nor would he read into the constitution as he saw it social rights not explicitly spelled out. In *Grissold v. Connecticut* he was unwilling to veto the state's right to make unwieldy or eccentric laws about contraception by finding a right to privacy in the Bill of Rights or enlarging the freedom of assembly and association. "The right of association," he told the colleagues, "is a right of assembly, and the right of the husband and wife to assemble in bed is a new right of assembly to me." Dissenting with Stewart in *Grissold*, Black rejected any judicial reliance on substantive views of liberty or due

process which he deemed an impermissible recourse to "natural law" that would allow judges to write into the constitution their own values. That procedure had been lambasted by liberals in the 1930s when it had been resorted to by conservative justices such as McReynolds. Opponents of the Warren Court often called for judges who would interpret rather than make the law. But Black was not alone in thinking that he was doing precisely that and rejecting judicial legislation. The results might sometimes appear "activist", as they did in free speech cases, or "restrained", as in the "sit-in" and privacy cases. Powell v. Texas in 1967 again saw Black arguing that in voiding a state law penalizing public drunkenness the Court was "going beyond the proper limits of judicial power".

Prolonged exposure to judicial biography may well help to fuel the suspicion that arguments about the proper role and limits of the judicial function are easily used as counters to be set out wherever needed to justify action or inaction dictated by attachment to particular values. Cynicism of that kind may be unfair to Frankfurter, Warren and Black, but perhaps not to scholars of a lesser order, such, possibly, as Whitaker, Goldberg or Thurgood Marshall. Goldberg, who came to the Court in 1962, thought it high praise of the Chief Justice to say that "he followed the path of voting and voting his genuine convictions".

It is a small disappointment at the end of Schwartz's impressive labour of reconstruction that he offers no overall judgment of the performance of the Warren Court, especially in the light of the criticisms of its jurisprudence by sympathetic critics, as well as by the authors of works such as *Government by Judiciary* and *Men Against America*. Certainly the Court's activity was momentous in its political and social impact. Decisions such as *Brown* and its progeny, together with *Baker v. Carr*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Mapp v. Ohio*, and *New York Times v. Sullivan* brought major changes in civil liberties and in the civil and criminal procedure of the states, breaking the mould of *much that had gone before*. The *New York Times* case, for example, as Archibald Cox remarked, "swept away 175 years of settled law".

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of judicial philosophy on the Court. What he tells us about its inner life shows up the crudity of the contrast between judicial activism and judicial restraint, and its uneasy relationship to other distinctions, between liberalism and conservatism, between narrow and broader theories of interpretation, and between judicial application of law and judicial legislation. It shows us in abundant detail that judicial restraint is not one but a cluster of attitudes. They include at least the following: a disposition to respect precedent; a disposition to decide cases on statutory or factual grounds rather than on wide constitutional principles; a disinclination to assume jurisdiction over lower court decisions turning on the assessment of factual evidence; a reluctance to put substantial fairness before procedural propriety; a

preference for a common standard of review for all types of legislation; and a high degree of deference for legislative judgment based on democratic or separation of powers grounds (with a potentially lower level of deference for executive officials). None of these dispositions is necessarily conservative in a political sense in terms of the end results of decided cases, though conservatives who in favour of activism and comment on "strict construction" often assume them to be so. On the day that Warren retired from the bench President Nixon, the well-known strict constructionist, attended the Court and the Chief Justice preached him a short sermon. The Court, he said, was "a continuing body". It served the public interest "guided only by the Constitution and our own consciences". He ventured to

print this out to the President "because you might not have looked into the matter". Considered as ceremonial insult, that was superior to any asperity of Frankfurter's.

In the end the Warren court may have weakened some popular impressions about the character of American government and confirmed others. Its record injects some doubt into the proposition that "the Supreme Court follows the election returns". The electorate (admittedly when judicially rearranged into equal electoral districts) has followed the Supreme Court. In that process Earl Warren, given his provenance, served the Separation of Powers well. His leadership underlining the independence of the judicial from the executive and legislative branches. Something of that was seen in the Chief Justice's last

case, *Powell v. McCormack*, in which the Court invalidated the exclusion by Congress of Representative Adam Clayton Powell. There was no way in which the Court could have enforced an order against Congress, but Warren was untroubled by that. Once, when the Court had ordered the release of an army prisoner, one of his clerks had asked him how they were going to make the army do it, citing Andrew Jackson's reported remark that "Chief Justice Marshall had made his decision; now let him enforce it". Warren's reply was "you don't have to worry about whether they're going to do it or not. If they don't do it they've destroyed the whole Republic, and they aren't going to do that." For one moment in July 1974, Nixon contemplated defiance of the Supreme Court's order to surrender his tapes;

but he too knew that such an action would have an awesome significance and that it could not be done. It was Earl Warren's confidence in the authority of his court and his statesman's mind that became characteristic of his leadership. Under it the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause acquired a wider than usual significance as a symbol of judicially enforced racial and civil equality.

The expansion through time of the Bill of Rights would not doubt have astonished its authors. Almost a hundred years ago Sir Henry Maine's *Popular Government* described it as containing "a certain number of amendments on comparatively minor points". In the light of hindsight this was a huge misjudgment.

Kissinger himself has been understandably distressed by Hersi's scathing personal vilification. He is said to be hesitating between a detailed refutation, which would further publicise Hersi's book, and a dignified silence that would allow his reputation to stand, somewhat tarnished, on his achievements. It will be some comfort to him that the National Committee on American Foreign Policy has just awarded him its Morgenthau Prize. But Morgenthau too was a German by birth and intellectual training. And that part of the trouble. Kissinger has portrayed Metternich and Castlereagh, the architects of the Vienna settlement who are to some extent his models, as having more difficulty with their own colleagues and public than with foreign statesmen. Metternich, especially, a Rhinelander brought up as a refugee who came to Austria at about the same age as Kissinger came to America, had a wider concept of the world of Europe than those who saw only Austrian interests. "For a long time now," he wrote to Wellington, "Europe has had for me in the quality of this quality for Kissinger. White House the most important seat of power [in Peking] was telephonic."

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On the altar of AI

H. C. Longuet-Higgins

GEOFF SIMONS

Are Computers Alive?: Evolution and New Life Forms
212pp. Brighton: Horwester. £12.95.
0 7108 0501 2

Quite suddenly—in the space of about a year—the British public has been engulfed by a tidal wave of literature about the marvels of information technology—IT to its familiars. Not that there is anything specially new about computers as such: for years people have been receiving bills for 0 pounds and 0 pence, and repelling the story of the computer that translated "out of sight, out of mind" into the Russian equivalent of "invisible idiot". What is new is the realization that some of our competitors, notably Japan, are exploiting IT to our economic disadvantage; and the simultaneous appearance on the home market of cheap, compact microcomputers that can be hitched up to the television-set and programmed, even by an adult, to play Space Wars and solve mathematical puzzles. Nearly every school in the country now boasts at least one "micro", at which pupils type themselves bleary in their efforts to commit rigorous ideas to "floppy disks", and in understaffed offices throughout the land, overworked secretaries struggle to increase productivity by attempting to master the cryptic instruction manuals of sleek, unforgiving word processors.

But to speak of IT as if it were merely a new technical development like the invention of concrete is seriously to underestimate its impact on the human imagination. Anyone who has actually used a computer will testify to a sense of wonder that a mere machine can be caused to perform complicated feats of symbol manipulation by merely typing into it a string of numbers, letters and marks of punctuation. There is undeniably something uncanny about being able to control a machine, not by brute force exerted on a steering-wheel, gear-lever or brake-pedal, but by the simple act of typing instructions in a secret language on an electronic keyboard.

In the earliest technologies tools served the purpose of converting human effort into useful work; with the invention of machines it became possible actually to replace muscle power by wind, water or steam, but all except the simplest tools demanded constant human intervention. In a few decades all that has changed; for such delicate manoeuvres as steering a space-probe to Jupiter human guidance is altogether too clumsy, and the only reliable pilot is a computer programmed in advance with the required orbit and the relevant equations of motion. The preparation of the computer programs that guide a space flight depends of course upon human skill of the highest order; but if all goes according to plan it is all going according to plan. It is irresistibly tempting to attribute intelligence, or even volition, to the automatic pilot as it carries out the instructions programmed into it. This is undoubtedly the reason for the screen success of Hal, the rogue computer, in Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey.

Arthur C. Clarke, on whose novel the film was based, realized that the electronic computer was already calling in question some of the basic categories by which we organize our experience. Until our own time the computer was a tool, a means of communication and logical deduction was a human prerogative; now that computers perform some of these functions so much faster and more accurately than we could, might they not ultimately acquire other superhuman powers, such as the initiative and the ability to rebel against their human creators? Clarke developed this idea in the entirely appropriate context of a science-fiction novel, which he is an acknowledged master. Other writers, equally aware of the fascination that computers inspire, but less careful to distinguish between fact and fantasy, are seizing the opportunity to establish themselves as the evangelists of a new religion.

Are computers alive? Evolution and New Life Forms, by Geoff Simons, is not untypical of the literary output of the artificial intelligentsia. The author is described on the title page as Chief Editor of the National Computing Centre in Manchester, so we should assume he knows what he is talking about. And just in case any doubt should arise later, we are assured by one Philip Davis on the dust-cover that we are in possession of "an exciting, well-written book". Professor Richard Gregory, always ready with a word of encouragement, adds: "Mr Simons makes a good case for saying that computers are evolving, and they pre-empt, and indeed that they live with us." (The overtones of this last phrase are amplified much later in a passage dealing with the more personal uses to which robots can be put.) But Mr Simons, author of no fewer than seven books on computers, is perfectly capable of speaking for himself from behind the anonymity of the publishers' blurb:

Are computers alive? Yeal and today they truly represent an emerging family of living species in the world—that is the startling argument of this landmark book... How will we relate to living machines? We need to find the answer soon.

The italics are his; the style is unmistakably that of a religious tract. The ostensible message of the book is that computers and robots are emerging life-forms, and must therefore be treated with the respect that we normally accord to real people. This proposition is initially supported by the argument that the capacity to process information is a monopoly of biological systems, and also the ability to reproduce; the objection that existing robots cannot reproduce without human assistance is dismissed on the grounds that sooner or later (according to the author) the robots will manage very well on their own, thank you. If Simons were merely concerned to establish that computers are alive in his own sense of the word, it would not need 200 pages for him to do so, but that, evidently, is not his primary purpose, which is to make the reader gasp with astonishment at what computers can do in a secret language in a secret language on an electronic keyboard.

Simons himself has been understandably distressed by Hersi's scathing personal vilification. He is said to be hesitating between a detailed refutation, which would further publicise Hersi's book, and a dignified silence that would allow his reputation to stand, somewhat tarnished, on his achievements. It will be some comfort to him that the National Committee on American Foreign Policy has just awarded him its Morgenthau Prize. But Morgenthau too was a German by birth and intellectual training. And that part of the trouble. Kissinger has portrayed Metternich and Castlereagh, the architects of the Vienna settlement who are to some extent his models, as having more difficulty with their own colleagues and public than with foreign statesmen. Metternich, especially, a Rhinelander brought up as a refugee who came to Austria at about the same age as Kissinger came to America, had a wider concept of the world of Europe than those who saw only Austrian interests. "For a long time now," he wrote to Wellington, "Europe has had for me in the quality of this quality for Kissinger. White House the most important seat of power [in Peking] was telephonic."

information about the history of computing and of robotics, both in fact and in fiction. One does not have to be a zealous computer-worshipper to agree with Simons's estimate (in an unusually sober paragraph) of the impact of computers on cognitive psychology:

By the late 1950s it was obvious that computers were going to affect psychology profoundly. Already it was clear that the emerging electronic devices could do many of the things that humans and other animals could do: for example they could learn, store, manipulate and recall information... A new and strange psychology/computing symbiosis was developing: computer developments were telling us more about the human mind, and psychological concepts were enlarging our vision of what computers could become.

It is a pity that Simons does not give more space to reflections of this kind, because an enhanced appreciation of nature's own information technology is one of the first signs of recovery from computer mania. Indeed it could be argued that IT's most enduring contribution to our culture will have been the way in which it has forced the psychologist to look for computational accounts of the way our own minds and senses work. How this has happened in the past decade or two is well illustrated by the enterprise of automatic speech recognition (ASR)—the problem of constructing a computer-controlled typewriter that could take down human speech. After all that has been discovered and published by phoneticians, physicists, psychologists and physiologists about speech and hearing, one might imagine that the scientific problems had by now been solved, and that ASR ought to be a straightforward application of the relevant results. Instead we find that

existing robots cannot reproduce without human assistance is dismissed on the grounds that sooner or later (according to the author) the robots will manage very well on their own, thank you. If Simons were merely concerned to establish that computers are alive in his own sense of the word, it would not need 200 pages for him to do so, but that, evidently, is not his primary purpose, which is to make the reader gasp with astonishment at what computers can do in a secret language in a secret language on an electronic keyboard.

Machines are evolving limbs, senses, brains, cognitive faculties, emotion, free will, and the capacity for reproduction. A machine capable of self-reproduction, of sensing the changing world and of taking appropriate adaptive action—must surely be regarded as alive.

If you believe all that, Mr Simons, you will believe anything. To suggest that machines are evolving anything at all, in the same sense as the elephant evolved its trunk, is to do violence to the basic vocabulary of biology; as for the suggestion that the component parts of robots can stand comparison with such marvels of biological engineering as the human hand, eye or brain, comment is superfluous. Know of no evidence, and Simons does not quote any, for the existence, even on the drawing-board, of robots that do not seem to occur to him that the philosophical problems raised by the attribution of feelings such as pain or love, and faculties such as free will, are not just thinly disguised problems of information processing.

Whether Simons's book eventually lives up to its epistolary, recorded on the flyleaf, remains to be seen: Computers have been universally heralded as miracle machines, but we are scarcely beginning to comprehend their staggering potential. This new book—a truly unique first, drawing on extensive study and learning in cybernetics, artificial intelligence, robotics, biology and philosophy—will prove to be a milestone in an exciting new field, that of computer biology.

But the book does contain much interesting and thought-provoking

The Metternich model

Adam Watson

SEYMOUR M. HERSH

Kissinger: The Price of Power
609pp. Fehrer. £15.
0 571 13175 1

Henry Kissinger has never been a popular figure in the United States. At the height of his fame and success many Americans applauded his extraordinary diplomatic skill and rejoiced in the advantages which it brought to their country. But he was not regarded as quintessentially American. He did not represent their collective aspirations and purposes, or project these into the disorderly and delinquent outside world. He earned their admiration and sometimes even awe, but not their trust.

Moreover, alongside the Americans who supported Kissinger there were two important factions who actively opposed him, partly from conviction that what he was doing was wrong and dangerous and partly from visceral dislike. On the one hand were the broadly called the left. The function of a political opposition is to oppose; and Kissinger was serving, very effectively, such a political and partisan Republican as President Nixon. But in addition the liberals hated Kissinger because they want America to conduct a virtuous foreign policy, and to be respected and praised round the world for acting in accordance with high moral principles—making the world safe for democracy, anticommunism, opposition to war and to the deployment of armed force.

The American liberals are not so different from their European counterparts. The conservatives, on the other hand, are more uniquely American. Their emotional and intellectual roots go back to those immigrants who rejected the tyrannical and oppressive old country and came to America to find better opportunities and more personal freedom. They understandably value America's geographical isolation and want to keep their country free, in Washington's much-quoted words, from entangling alliances. They do not doubt, as the liberals do, that America is virtuous; they want to keep it strong. They dislike and fear communism, especially the Soviet government which also symbolises all the tyrannical aspects of the old country from which they or their ancestors happily escaped. For Americans of East European origin this symbolism is particularly vivid.

Kissinger was not concerned with either of these strong and consecrated American traditions. As a professor at Harvard, and since, he has looked at the world as a global system of states, and would be states, each different from the others, and valuing its independence and identity; but all increasingly interdependent and none any longer able in this nuclear age to make itself immune from the impact of the others. The states which are thus locked into an inescapable and dangerous global society need first of all to show restraint in pursuing their interests and especially that cherished principle, A special responsibility for managing the international system devolves on the statesman who conducts the policies of the great powers, which because of their size and

strength, their nuclear arsenals and the range of their interests, can affect the system for good or ill altogether more than smaller states. Kissinger holds that an international system which all the great powers recognize as legitimate—that is, one in which they all feel they have a significant stake and an acceptable say—can be managed by means of rules and codes of conduct, a balance of power (the only alternative, he maintains, is an imbalance of power) and a diplomatic dialogue in order to adjust differences by negotiation. Many differences which can fester into conflict if simply argued on the basis of opposing principles can be resolved or mitigated by negotiation and compromise. "Other powers", he states, "are not factors to be manipulated but forces to be reconciled." Compromise therefore, far from being a partial failure to achieve foreign policy goals conceived as absolutes, as both the liberals and conservatives hold, becomes the basic technique for achieving Kissinger's goal of "stability based on an equilibrium of interests". But it is of course not enough for a statesman to understand this: he must be able to do it. The statesman needs a dexterity in negotiation, a certain knack which Kissinger believed, and when given the chance effectively demonstrated, that he had.

But was it possible to deal with the Soviet Union or China on the basis of these assumptions? Kissinger recognized that where a major power rejects the international order, so that the system itself rather than the adjustment or differences within it becomes the issue, its relationships with other powers must be revolutionary. In such circumstances, diplomacy, which he describes as "the art of restraining the exercise of power", cannot function. It was Kissinger's unspoken premise that neither the Soviet Union nor Communist China was any longer so revolutionary as to reject the system itself. A policy based on these assumptions was hard for many Americans, both of right and left, to understand, and harder still for them to stomach. President Reagan's election campaign vehemently denounced Kissinger's approach to international affairs.

A foreigner by birth, with no political constituency or power-base of his own, Kissinger had to find a patron. He would have preferred Nelson Rockefeller, but Nixon became President, and Kissinger was glad to become his personal secretary. He had a strong and stable grasp of the overseas role of the Presidency. He has recently restated his view that international differences cannot be settled once for all, and that what is needed, especially between the United States and the Soviet Union, is "a continuing process for settling those differences that can be resolved and for preventing the irreconcilable differences from leading to war". Kissinger was therefore a natural ally of Nixon's. At the beginning of his presidency Nixon was much impressed by Robert Black's powerful biography of Durnell, and he had some of Durnell's qualities. Especially, he seems to have recognized in Kissinger the rare ability to conduct complex diplomatic negotiations with a permanent, provided an expedient *modus vivendi* that reflected the balance of forces at the moment, and gave

each power involved, or at least each great power, what it wanted most. From the beginning both men understood that the policies and the final decisions, and the credit for any successes, would be the President's. Kissinger's task was to elaborate these policies and when they were approved to implement them. Kissinger was prepared for this role: while still at



Harvard he had written, "The achievements of diplomacy ultimately will depend on its objectives, which are defined outside the sphere of diplomacy and which diplomacy must treat as given."

The central problem was to deal with the two great communist powers. The Vietnam war, the Middle East, Brando's Opus, all important though these issues were, must be treated in isolation but must be assigned subordinate positions in the grand strategic balance. The nature of Soviet and Chinese government, the hostility of the Republican Party to "world communism", and also Nixon's and Kissinger's own penchant for clandestine intrigue, all inclined them towards secrecy in their negotiations with the communist powers. Moreover, Kissinger brought to the White House a basic distrust of bureaucracy, and especially of the State Department which he regarded as hidebound and leaky. So the two men developed the celebrated "backchannel", which like Louis XIV's secret diplomacy conducted major negotiations without telling the Secretary of State. US embassies abroad were "consular" leaders whose "active and constant" required both constitutionally and in practice.

The backchannel may have been necessary for the success of Nixon's and Kissinger's vision. But to conduct foreign policy beneath a cloak of secrecy and deception was the opposite of Woodrow Wilson's genuinely open arrival at the professional interests of what Americans call the media, and especially the elite of well-known columnists and broadcasters. These purveyors of a far wider personal following and mould public opinion far more effectively than the State Department could. Kissinger's policy of "active and constant" required both constitutionally and in practice.

others thrive on buying and disclosing government secrets, on scandal and innuendo. The clandestinity with which Nixon and Kissinger went about their negotiations alienated many influential people who approved of their strategic purposes but believed it could be achieved through more orthodox channels—and briefed the pundits accordingly.

perfidious, office-loving political habits, greedily fur power without responsibility. Even Nixon, who figures prominently in the book, is written up to a limited extent in order to write Kissinger down. He is credited with an overall strategic purpose: his own re-election. Re-election is present in every democratic politician's mind, and in Nixon's it was more present than in most. By concentrating on the motive alone, Hersi is able to paint the President's visit to Communist China as an election stunt. "For a while House the most important seat of power [in Peking] was telephonic."

Kissinger himself is allowed no respite as respectable as electioneering. The first paragraph of the book sets out one and prepares the reader for the exposure of hollowness to come. After the election there would be some finer offices, with antique desks and hand-woven rugs, possibly a view of the Rose Garden, and fires that were kept burning year-round. The reader who wishes to see the great of Vietnam come down to size may be titillated by the prospect. We are soon into "Cambodia: the Secret Bombing" (even before about military operations in warfare can be made to seem un-American), and Chapter Eight (out of forty-one) already entitled "Decay". But soon the long and very detailed history of Kissinger's and suggestion becomes weary. Some, in the same way as the success of sexual escapades in pornography, is the success of Kissinger's in the pursuit of temporary and local makeshifts: he allowed the urgent to gain too much on the important, Howard points out that Kissinger's essentially strategic approach was perhaps obsessional. He began to put it into practice: "Military strength and alliances were increasingly irrelevant to a world where change was being determined by social, economic and ideological developments beyond the power of any state to affect more than marginally."

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Even so, Hersi has mounted enough evidence of resentment against Kissinger, of his intrigues and his crowd-pleasing involvement in the White House, to portray effectively the seamy and slippery sides of his personality. However, these pages are facts, and the general moral is already rather uncharitably taken for granted. Before Hersi's book appeared, Kissinger was not seen as a man. Kissinger's *The Power* states the case for the prosecution in such detail that, absent general thesis may be, no biographer will be able to ignore it, and Hersi

Umberto Eco THE NAME OF THE ROSE

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Leisure and privacy

Fleur Adcock

CAROL RUMENS

Scenes from the Gingerbread House
Unnumbered pages. Newcastle upon
Tyne: Bloodaxe. £1.
0 906427 27 4

Star Whisper

69pp. Secker and Warburg. £4.
0 456 43901 8

PENELOPE SHUTTLE

The Child-Stealer
63pp. Oxford University Press. £4.95.
0 19211956 7

Carol Rumens has published two full-length collections and a pamphlet of poems within the space of three years. This fecundity has been accompanied by a visible progression into confidence and maturity of technique. Some of her earlier work had an air of the creative writing exercise about it, and even her latest book includes a villanelle (seldom a good idea); but there is much to admire in these two recent publications.

The Bloodaxe pamphlet, *Scenes from the Gingerbread House*, is a carefully organized sequence of nine poems recalling episodes from a pinched, restricted childhood spent in the house of grandparents and glimpsed by shadows of what were, for the child, mysteries: a mongrel aunt, a dangerous illness, a father declining gently into failure and despair, grandparents still embittered by the death of their baby son a generation before. The claustrophobic privacy of this life are mimed by the way each poem is tightly laced into the next by theme or imagery or both. At the end, though, there is an opening out into "a seeing at the back of my eyes" — France viewed from the pier at Folkestone, only "a smear of cloud" but France nevertheless.

A rather more ambitious and more

collected *Star Whisper*, headed by two neatly juxtaposed epigrams, one from the Prince Regent boasting that his park "will quite eclipse Napoleon" and one from Napoleon himself on love as "the whole concern / of leashed societies". Less poplite the part — "footmen and maids abandoned in the grass", strolling couples, paired swans — and the writing gleams and sparkles with imagery of colours, textures and light; but as the poems follow one another the atmosphere grows chillier and darker; tulips and roses give way to horse-chestnuts and finally to snow; there is a subtly managed modulation from excited discovery into what the final poem calls "a statement of loss". Each part presents a different scene, but one of the underlying stories is of a marriage; the second poem, "College Path", reminds us that Regent's Park harbours not only water-fowl but students; "I set out for Philosophy / and left clutching Marriage"; and the philosophical tale and concepts fit among the flower-beds, desolates and slowly fading vistas, and the idea of marriage slays around too; in "Dark Path" a pair of black swans "float their listless epithalamium. / Better, they'd say, an unadoring pair / than one in deep love alone".

Clearly the concerns of this sequence are more than narrowly personal; a "leashed society" is not a neutral fact about any individual relationship, and the metaphors used, even of "Bower" tricks with menacer, tell us of the performance of the dandified ballet of the fringed quill, "voices" are better than most of India; "chestnut trees" "pick little white embryos at their feet". Life is always on the verge of a massacre. In some of these violent images do not lie, although there are times when Rumens appears to be wearing her social conscience on her sleeve.

The rest of the collection, however, shows a consistency between thought and its expression. Her moments of illumination are not confined for illustration; if her metaphors go over the top, as they occasionally do, this does not make her a writer for "Julius" effect, but out of a serious habit of mind; her imagination is naturally vivid and pictorial, and her preoccupation with public and political violence seems

honourable and not assumed. The poems with which the collection opens refer often to Eastern Europe; they are full of exiles and emigrants, people making painful adjustments or failing to adjust at all: Czechoslovakia, in "Geography Lesson", is a weeping refugee child, "all the hurt geography" own; the title poem (as crystalline and beautifully crafted as a snowflake, although its conclusion doesn't bear close scrutiny) is about Siberia. Rumens sets herself challenges which a less adventurous writer would avoid, and as often as not her daring pays off; her failures, when they occur, are of tact.

The remaining poems have a mixture of themes; there are love poems, family poems (for her daughters and her mother), and a poignant, sensitively controlled elegy for her father, "An Easter Garland" which combines images of spring and of the Biblical Easter story with that of the sick man mowing his daughter's lawn. There are also urban scenes: Cambridge, North Croydon, the South Circular Road. Rumens writes with the toughness and, when she's in the mood, the moon daze of a native Londoner. The range and vigour of this collection are impressive.

Penelope Shuttle's is a more private world, almost entirely limited to her house, her garden, and the confines of her own skin, with the dreams and memories which fill her head and the fluctuating hormonal surges which govern her body. Her first collection, *The Orchard Upside*, was notable for its agonized or celebratory accounts of menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth. This new book also has several poems which trace (or seem to trace — some of them are so wreathed in symbolism that it is difficult to tell) the effects on women of the menstrual cycle and the presence or absence of pregnancy, but they are less immediately physical: instead of "this pulp of womb" or "the bloody holy hole" we have "the verb of the cervix" and "a phoenix the colour of blood".

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"Feet 133", 1957, a photograph by Aaron Siskind; from Aaron Siskind: Pleasures and Terrors, by Care Chiarenza. 283pp. New York Graphic Society / Hutchinson. £30. 0 8212 1522 2.)

The shy trickster

Paul Muldoon

Quoof
64pp. Faber. £4.
0 571 13117 4

The cover of Paul Muldoon's new book tells us that the very long poem forming its second half, "The More a Man Has the More a Man Wants", is loosely based on the Trickster cycle of the Winnebago Indians. Readers whose memories of this cycle are not as vivid as they once were will be heartened to discover that they need not be unduly deterred: the mythological base of the poem is disguised and unobtrusive, in the same way that Lisa Celtic legend lying behind Muldoon's last long poem, "Imram", was. The information is, nevertheless, helpful in approaching the slippery, oblique poems of *Quoof*, in that it summons the word "trickster" to mind.

These poems delight in a wily, mischievous, nonchalant negotiation between the affections and attachments of Muldoon's own childhood, family and place, and the ironic discriminations of a cool literary sensibility and historical awareness. This seems a disturbingly heavy-handed way of describing these deft, artfully effortless poems; but their wit does reside in some such dialect, and a large part of their effectiveness derives from the skilful balancing act that it implies: Muldoon's technical virtuosity in the breathlessly off-beat curtsies, for instance, of his "irregular" impressions of being, like the work of the poet in *Timon of Athens*, things slipped idly from him — trickily consorts with what sometimes seems a alightness or jokiness or unclarity in his poems' occasions. The reader's delight is all in the trickery. These poems run rings around us, wrong-foot us and outwit us; they invite us, and entice us, to catch up with them.

You would have to be a masochist not to find the experience, occasionally, exasperating. I have read and re-read "Yggdrasil" to the point of memorizing it (which is not difficult, given its limpid, seductive cadences and assonances, its perfect music), and I have my ideas about how its fluid

poem is an extraordinarily sure-footed performance which refracts some of the present circumstances of the North through a shimmering and a surrealist gloss. Its heady juxtapositions — its transitions, and its impossible ideological and episodic, it owes something to surrealist film and cartoon and, quite possibly, to postmodernism.

The poem's hero, Gallogly, is a man in disguise, a spy, an obdurate fifth columnist; and, eventually, a "gullible" word for the word for a snail-dragon which Spenser, in the *Story of Ireland*, traced etymologically to a connection with English mercenaries. The allegory of this suggests is not so much pursued in the poem as dissolved into an astonishing display of verbal dexterity and cunning. This is Gallogly seeing something on the horizon:

If it wasn't an Indian,
A Sioux, an ugly Sioux,
He means, of course, an Oglala.
Slouching, he means, the family tree
Of an Ulsterman who had some hand
In the massacre at Wounded Knee.
We hardly have time to puzzle out the relationship — between "Gallogly" and "Oglala" here, if there is one, before we're busily trying to imagine a hand in a wounded knee. A large part of the poem's technique is to bring us unerringly back to this, to the cliché and idiom; and having a hand in a knee is not just a linguistic joke in a poem which imagines what happens to people when they are blown to pieces by bombs. This is someone's after-death similar to Airey Neave's.

Once they collect his snail-dragon he doesn't quite add up. They're shy of a foot, and a calf which stems from his left shoe like a severely pruned-back shrub.

Muldoon's trickery is in deadly earnest here. The fastidiousness of the description, the cool relief of simile, are actually a kind of desperation. The shy beast enters the language in this book as the shy of a foot; their irony, restraint and undecidability are a way of coping with emotions which could not altogether get out of hand.

Certainly nothing is ever quite what it seems in "The More a Man Has the More a Man Wants", and this two-volume poem — someone is blown to pieces. The poem carries a further stage in Muldoon's interest in fictionalized narrative; but, whereas "Imram" seemed to me never to find a proper focus for its theme of quest, and never fully to realize the potential of its Chaucerian ventriloquism, the new

poem is an extraordinarily sure-footed performance which refracts some of the present circumstances of the North through a shimmering and a surrealist gloss. Its heady juxtapositions — its transitions, and its impossible ideological and episodic, it owes something to surrealist film and cartoon and, quite possibly, to postmodernism.

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ECONOMIC HISTORY

ERIC R. WOLF

Europe and the People without History
300pp. University of California
Press. £25.50.
0 520 04459 2

The celebrated discovery by Anderson's child that the Emperor wore no clothes implied an earlier proposition: he should have been wearing some. But of what kind? It does not take more than a layman's common sense to observe, in the teeth of fashionable historiographical scepticism, that the social sciences and history itself need "a history that could account for the ways in which the social system of the modern world came into being, and that would strive to make any sense of all societies, including 'modern'". It takes a considerable effort by a sophisticated intellect, great facility of mind, not to mention a lot of reading and courage, to sketch the ways in which such a history could be constructed, taking the entire development of the globe since about 1400 as an illustration. Eric Wolf's new book sets out to do no less.

Wolf is unusually well qualified for the task. Unlike most Anglo-American anthropologists, he is known not so much for his "tribe or region, as for his subject: people in agriculture. His little book on *Peasants* (1966) is much the finest introduction there is to the subject, and he is known to a wider public for a study of the peasant element in the revolutions of our time, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*. He has published not only on his own area of Spanish Central America, on states, plantations and peasants, but on the origins of Islam and the formation of nations. He is the co-author of *The Hidden Frontier* (1974), a superb historical-anthropological study of two neighbouring but radically different Tyrolean communities, which is essential reading for students of modern nationality.

This approach has the advantage for historians concerned to present history in global terms that it gives them a genuine justification for their endeavours, which are usually undertaken on no better grounds than those which lead shops to describe

Not surprisingly, he has long been associated with the first modern interdisciplinary journal of its kind, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*.

The anthropological tradition against which Wolf rebels is that which treats human societies (ie, in practice the micro-populations which have been the subject of field-work and monographs) as self-contained, self-reproducing and ideally self-stabilizing systems. But, he argues, no tribe or community is or has ever been an island, and the world, a totality of interconnected processes or system, is not and never has been a sum of self-contained human groups and cultures. What appears as unchanging and self-replicating is not only the result of coping with the constant, complex process of internal and external tensions, but is often the product of historical change. What happened to the Amazonian Mundurucu, who changed from patrilineal and patrilineal to the unusual combination of matrilineality and patrilineal reckoning, under the impact of the Brazilian rubber boom, had probably happened to many a "tribe" encountered by nineteenth-century ethnographers and regarded as a "primitive" prehistoric or a-historic survival, like some collective human coelacanth. There are no people without history or who can be understood without it. Their history, like ours, is incompressible outside its setting in a wider world (which has become coterminous with the inhabited globe) and, certainly, in the past half-millennium it cannot be understood except through the intersections of different types of social organization, each modified by interaction with the others.

In fact, Wolf argues, the geographical form of interaction is merely a special aspect of a more general pattern. The history of the working classes in industrial society poses exactly the same problems as that of the impact of capitalism on notionally traditional societies "supposedly arrested on some timeless plateau of evolution". In fact, the two branches of history are but one. Or, in even more general terms, whether a society exports or imports capitalism, belongs to "core" or "periphery", it has developed and evolves out of a plurality of social orderings. In this sense macrocosm and microcosm in history are one.

How is this intermingling of orders to be analysed? The major merit of Wolf's book does not lie in his ability critically to synthesize the literature about the world since 1400, registered in forty-five pages of bibliography. Others can do as much, at the inevitable risk of exposure to the flanking fire of specialist snipers. It lies in the attempt to provide a way of

The movement of capitalism

Eric Hobsbawm

grasping the "strategic features of... (the) variability" in the "different social systems and cultural understandings" which European capitalism encountered in its expansion and consequently "the central processes at work in the interaction of Europeans with the majority of the world's population".

The test of a book such as this is therefore not whether we accept its actual reading of the historical record, or the authorities whose findings Wolf accepts, modifies or reinterprets. It would not be significantly less interesting if, say, the notion of "long waves" of capitalist development which he accepts, proved untenable, or if it turns out that his sources on the Mundurucu are mistaken. The question is rather whether his analytical approach is superior to others.

This is inevitably a question about a Marxian approach to history, since Wolf clearly gives a central place to two basically Marxian concepts: production as "the complex of mutually dependent relations among nature, social labor and social organization" and culture, or systems of ideas, seen as occurring "within the determinate compass of a mode of production deployed to render nature amenable to human use". "Mind" for him does not "follow an independent course of its own". For the purposes of his book the long-term evolution of humanity, or the possible sequence of social formations, are irrelevant and remain undiscussed, except for remarks incidental to his argument. He is not concerned with the famous "contradiction" between the developing material productive forces of society and the existing productive relations, except in so far as structural tensions of this kind within any of the "modes of production" and those arising out of the interaction between various modes, may or may not bear on his problem. Marxian ideas are here employed primarily to explain the "global interactions of human

aggregates" in the past half-millennium, though they are evidently intended also to explain them for any other period.

Wolf's particular positions in the lively international Marxist debates about theory and history will not be of major concern to non-specialists, any more than his specific disagreements with various schools of anthropologists. The lengthy bibliographical notes, in which he discusses his sources and obligations, throw some light on these matters. One might merely note that his main interest lies not in causal connections but in variability and combination. Hence the central importance for his analysis of various "modes of production", ie, of the "social mobilisation, deployment and allocation of labor". For their value is precisely that the mode of production "used comparatively... calls attention to major variations in political-economic arrangements and allows us to visualise their effects" as well as to understand the "variable and shifting supports" of the development of global capitalism, which "were often embedded in different modes of production".

Three broad "modes" of this kind are directly relevant to his purpose, which, very sensibly, shows no interest in exhaustive classification and — one might add — is incompatible with evolutionary unilinearity: a "capitalist mode", a "tributary mode" and a "kin-ordered mode". None are identical with the notion of a "society", for this belongs to a different level of abstraction and has a different explanatory scope. One may add that Wolf holds that each mode tends to generate its own types of "culture" or symbolic universes which, in their various versions, generalize the "essential distinctions among human beings" that each mode entails.

His analytical model of the "capitalist mode" is more or less classically Marxian. The "tributary mode" is a continuum of systems in

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which tribute is extracted from producers by political and military means, ranging from systems of highly concentrated to those of extremely diffused power, and varying in the ways in which tribute is collected, circulated and distributed. The "feudalism" and "Asiatic mode of production" of classic Marxist debate are regarded as among the possible variants of a mode in which surpluses are essentially extracted non-economically. The larger fields constituted by the political and commercial interaction of tributary societies, Wolf holds, have their counterpart in "civilisations" or zones of ideology with a prevalent model of the cosmic order, which tends to pivot on a hegemonic tributary society central to each zone.

The historical dynamics of such societies were, at least in the old world, closely bound up with the ebb and flow of pastoral-nomadic populations—acutely analysed—but also "with the widening and narrowing of surplus transfer through overland trade". For, with rather rare exceptions (eg. where all the surplus is consumed *in situ* or, as perhaps among the Incas, where commerce is virtually absent), the distribution of the surplus normally depends partly on buying and selling, and special groups engaged in these activities. This and the mercantile activity integral to the tributary mode requires control, if the commercialization of the goods and services on which tributary power rests is not to risk "resubsuming social priorities" away from political or military rulers. In certain circumstances, as within medieval Europe and later, when Western merchants, backed by independent power, impinged on non-European societies, such control becomes difficult. Yet, against Weber and "world-market" Marxists like Frank and Wallerstein, Wolf insists on the basic symbiosis of trade and pro-capitalist modes. Capitalism becomes dominant only with industrialization. So long as production was dominated by tribute or kin, mercantile activity does not automatically lead to capitalism, though it might tend in this direction by making direct producers dependent on the market as a source of goods and services.

Kinship, in the "kin-ordered mode", is seen neither as essentially a device

for the social regulation of biological descent, nor as a system of symbolical constructs (though it is obviously both also), but as a way of ordering social labour and access to it. The ways of establishing such rights and claims vary widely, but are clearly simpler where resources are widely distributed and available to any-bodied person (as in food-collecting "bands") than where they are restricted, as is the case when nature is transformed by plant or animal cultivation. This second situation implies not only a rather more complex social division of labour, but a transgenerational corpus of claims across generations to social labour through real or fictitious pedigrees, and the elements of an unequal politico-social order which threatens to burst the bounds of kinship. It can be contained so long as there is no other mechanism for aggregating or mobilizing labour apart from the particular relations set up by kinship, ie. so long as alliances and oppositions are not between *classes* of people and the potential rulers cannot call upon outside resources. It would seem that the kin-ordered mode turns into class society, and with it into societies possessing states, either by the transformation of "chiefly" lineages into a ruling class, especially when such aristocracies "bud off to conquer and rule foreign populations", or when kin-ordered groups enter into relations with tributary or capitalist societies, which may offer chiefs external resources and hence "a possible following outside of kinship and unencumbered by it". Hence, Wolf argues, the notorious readiness of chiefs to collaborate with European slave-hunters and fur-traders.

Neither "Europe" nor the "people without history" in their various versions of pre-capitalist modes would have developed in quite the way each did without the others. Yet if the relationship is two-sided, it is also plainly asymmetrical. Wolf has little except nuances to add to the large literature on European expansion and its significance for the development of capitalism. What will be unfamiliar to most readers, especially those brought up on conventional history, is his treatment of the non-European world, which he sees as a crucial factor in the impact of capitalist penetration. The initial survey of the world in 1400 can be strongly recommended. It is not only an excellent introduction for the layman—not least for its sense of human geography—but an illuminating and critical analysis, not without original interpretations especially on India, of the strength and weakness of pastoral nomad societies, Indian caste

structure, East and Southeast Asia, as well as, at understandingly greater length, pre-Columbian America.

Much of what Wolf says about the transformation of society under the impact of European trade and conquest will be new to anyone who has not followed the striking recent advances in ethnohistory and the history of Africa and Indo-America. Virtually all of it is exciting. The sheer historical novelty of apparently "primitive" cultural configurations such as those of the Plains Indians (adopted "in the course of a few brief years" by pedestrian hunter-gatherers and pastoralists making use of the Euro-imported horse and gun); the effect of the European fur trade on the economy, politics and culture of Huron, Iroquois and Cree; and the different effects of the Russian fur trade in Asia and America: these will open quite novel perspectives for most of us. Wolf's own expertise on Latin America naturally stands him in good stead. His anthropological colleagues will no doubt soon show whether they accept his "historisations" of some of the peoples who were the subject of several of the more celebrated monographs in the literature of their subject.

The major strength of Wolf's book—

his concentration on interaction, intermingling and mutual modification—is at the same time its major weakness, since it tends to take for granted the nature of the dynamism which has brought the world from pre-history to the late twentieth century. This is a book about connections rather than causes. Or rather, the author has re-thought the problems of the genesis and development of capitalism less fundamentally than those of the interconnections essential to it. No doubt this is a task more suited to historians than anthropologists. His account of capitalist development is a useful contribution to a debate, not by any means confined to Marxists, which has recently regained much vigour, and is valuable chiefly for clearly pointing to questions which are usually unrecognized, such as why the work-force of capitalism should have developed as "free labour" and not in some other form. Wolf's most interesting contribution to the debate lies closest to his major concern. It is his insistence on the continuous "processes by which new working classes are simultaneously created and segmented", as the labour force is recruited "from a wide variety of social and cultural backgrounds, and (inserted) ... into variable political and economic hierarchies". Today,

"within an ever more integrated world, we witness the growth of ever more diverse proletarian diasporas". The final sentence of a very impressive book, forms a characteristically suggestive and open-ended conclusion to it.

Europe and the People without History is the work of a powerful theoretical intelligence, but one in which the nature of the dynamism which has brought the world from pre-history to the late twentieth century.

Patterns of presentments

Paul Slack

J. A. SHARPE
Crime in seventeenth-century England: A county study
289pp. Cambridge University Press.
£25.
0 521 25074 9

Two mighty historical growth-industries lie behind J. A. Sharpe's searching and scholarly book. The questions which it poses and ponders arise from the newer of them: the history of crime, which has given birth in recent years to a symposium, special issues of journals, regular international conferences, and heated interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary debates about concepts, procedures and sources. Dr Sharpe has been an energetic participant in all this activity, and his monograph comes with impressive credentials. It is published both by Cambridge University Press as a *Past and Present* Publication and by the Maison de Sciences de l'Homme in Paris, as the first in a series of volumes on the history of crime and criminal justice.

The scholarship, however, has its roots in a second, older and native industry: the history of local communities in early modern England, and of one county in particular. Voluminous records and an unusually hospitable Record Office have made Essex the best-known corner of Stuart England. Can there be any historian of the period who has not heard of its Parliamentary magnates and Puritan village elders, its parsons and witches, of Earls Colne and Terling? Now we have its criminals, or rather some of them: the men and women indicted or presented before Quarter Sessions, Assizes and King's Bench between 1620 and 1680. Sharpe takes the records of these courts and subjects them to rigorous criticism and quantitative analysis.

He tabulates the various kinds of offences, starting with petty disorders and nuisance and moving through sexual offences and not to theft, assault and murder. He describes the incidence of each crime both in relation to others and over time. We are told how many offenders were punished and by what means. He uses other local sources to show relationships between criminals and victims, and between crime and the precise local social and economic context. This is not a book for those who want general hypotheses about social control, criminal subcultures or law as a mediator of class relations: therefore, its conspicuous features are its healthy scepticism about the broad assertions hazarded by early pioneers in the field, and its sensitivity to problems of evidence. It is firmly rooted in place, in time, and above all in the documents.

Such caution is dictated by the two major difficulties which dominate the book, as they do all serious accounts of

crime in the past. The first is the perplexing "dark figure", the amount of criminality which was not presented in court. Sharpe discusses the origins of indictments and presentments and shows how they were often a last resort, after other means of resolving conflict had failed. Related to this is the second difficulty: the extent to which the records reflect, not actual criminal behaviour, but the changing sensitivities and ambitions of those who shaped the legal machine, from legislators and judges down to constables. Here again we are shown the flexibility of the system of criminal justice, its responsiveness to changing circumstances and anxieties, and the urgent need for historical research into public opinion about crime and punishment before we can fully understand it.

Where firm assertions are possible, they sometimes underlie conclusions reached earlier. In Joel Samaha's study of Elizabethan Essex, for example, and in J. S. Cockburn's more substantial and perceptive investigations into the Home Circuit Assize files. The level of crime; and particularly of crimes against property fluctuated with economic conditions. It was particularly high in the depressed 1620s; and the correlation between theft and grain prices weakened after the mid-seventeenth century as economic conditions improved. It was a more violent society than our own, with homicide running at about three times its modern rate, infanticide common, and people in all ranks of society readily indulging in personal assault. There are no surprises there. By extending his work into the later seventeenth century, and by scrupulously setting the indictments in their local context, however, Sharpe is able to show facets of the subject which could not so easily have been predicted in advance.

On the question of violence, for example, it has long been realized that offences against property were far more numerous than cases of assault and murder. The argument that the early modern period saw a transition from "violence-dominated" to "property-dominated" crime holds no water as far as England is concerned. Yet it would be equally false to argue that there was little important change at all from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. In Essex between 1620 and 1680 there appears to have been a decline both in homicide and, more remarkably, in property offences: perhaps a result of economic improvement and perhaps a symptom of increasing social stability. Sharpe also questions the common assumption that forest and woodland areas were more disorderly than other farming regions. There was no such correlation in Essex. Neither was crime particularly heavy in the neighbourhood of London, although it was associated with the presence of a rural textile industry elsewhere in the county.

Still more arresting are Sharpe's findings on the impact—or more accurately the lack of impact—of the Interregnum. The Puritan drive for Reformation of Manners did not produce a great wave of presentments against moral offenders in the 1640s and 1650s. As many unlicensed alehouses were detected in the early 1620s as in the early 1650s, and prosecutions for drink offences were more numerous in the early 1670s than they had been twenty years before. The 1670s turn out to be especially intriguing, since they also saw a large rise in the number of indictments against people refusing to work. This specifically Puritan aspiration seems to have affected patterns of recorded crime throughout the period, the imposition of labour discipline was a special concern at the end.

When all qualifications have been made, therefore, we are left with indications of important changes in the course of the seventeenth century, both in crime and in the system of justice enforcing the law. It looks as if violence and theft declined, the number of executions certainly fell. Anxieties about vagrancy waned, replaced by new efforts to control the behaviour of the resident poor. Society, one might conclude, became more orderly must not put words in the author's mouth. Dr Sharpe insists that we need studies of other counties, of other courts (particularly manorial and ecclesiastical), and of the period immediately after 1680, before we can venture sweeping conclusions. His purpose here is to persuade the readers of crime and of the seventeenth century to question their assumptions and look more closely at their sources, and he succeeds splendidly.

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It is nearly a hundred years since Havelock Ellis conceived of a project demanding "courage, scholarship, and enthusiasm": the founding of a series of popular and inexpensive editions of "The Best Plays" of the Old Dramatists. "Courage" was needed because the Mermaid series, as it came to be called, was to present unadorned texts of certain dramatists whom Ellis regarded as daring, not to say revolutionary, social thinkers: the prospect of intellectual storm-trooping was (as ever for Ellis) particularly appealing. The obvious publisher for such a series was Henry Vizetelly, who had established his credentials by publishing English translations of Flaubert, Mopussant, Daudet, and other controversial French authors. Ellis's own "expurgated edition" of the plays of Christopher Marlowe was to be the first title in the new series. It carried no introductory essay by J. A. Symonds, deciding that Elizabethan drama showed "the freedom of a great race conscious of their adolescent vigour", and (at Ellis's insistence) an appendix containing the notorious Baines note, testifying to Marlowe's religious and sexual unorthodoxies. Both Symonds and Vizetelly privately wondered if this last touch did not stretch the limits of freedom and adolescent vigour too far. In the end Vizetelly deleted certain words and phrases from the Baines note, prudently replacing them by dots. Vizetelly's general caution was justified: before long he was to be prosecuted and jailed for publishing translations of Zola, and to retire dispiritedly from business. The Mermaid series, however, was by now a going concern. It passed to its publishers, and proceeded in its remarkable way (characterized at times by enthusiasm rather than scholarship, no matter) to introduce several generations of readers to the dramatic literature of sixteenth and seventeenth-century England.

By the 1920s, however, more lavish editions of the English dramatists were of their way. In London, while the Phoenix Society indefatigably re-edited the adequate presentment of the plays of the older dramatists, Restoration drama—for reasons that would doubt reward sociological enquiry—entered a period of special vogue. Brett-Smith's still-unsurpassed 1930 edition of Etherege's *Love for Love*, as do the more recent, more lavishly illustrated and more expensive Nonesuch editions issued from the hand of that most irregular of editors, Montague Summers, between 1922 and 1932, Summers had

edited Congreve, Wycherley, Otway and Dryden for the Nonesuch series and Shadwell for the Fortune Press, in a grand total of twenty-two volumes. By the mid-1930s he was busy with Snithorne, Ravenscroft and Settle, and eagerly surveying the tasks that lay ahead.

But how much remains to be done! Nat Lee, I am glad to say, is safe in the hands of my friend Miss Maelcon. Crowne, D'Urfey, Banks, Monford, Sir Robert Howard, Davenant (here is a fine field), Colley Cibber, George Pownell, Wilson, the ladies, Mrs. Powley, the philosophical Mrs

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Never say Smock

Ian Donaldson

The original Mermaids cost half a crown each, and contained on average five plays per volume: sixpence a play. Swinburne's and Ellis's two-volume Middletons gave you ten plays, including several which have not been edited in recent years. The recent Cambridge University Press series, Plays by Renaissance and Restoration Dramatists, does not (alas) offer a bargain of quite that kind, nor does it carry the air of excitement that the sexologist imparted to the Mermaids, or the chronicler of witchcraft to the Nonesuch dramatists. Yet it aims to fill a gap that the first (at least) of those earlier editions once occupied, and in

close-argued textual notes at the end of his Middleton, while Anthony Henderson, at the other extreme, gives no very adequate idea of the complex editorial problems posed by Congreve's texts, little sense of fresh textual endeavour, and no additional textual notes. His edition also contains a crop of typographical errors.

Texts are modernized according to principles which differ from editor to editor. Frost is occasionally conservative in modernizing Middleton's spelling, aiming to preserve older forms where these appear to convey a significantly different value; his punctuation, so it seems, is unconstrainedly modern.

as a rule) four plays per volume at a price not wholly beyond the hopes of student buyers, places certain obvious constraints upon its editors. The annotation of these editions is often necessarily sparser than one would ideally like. For detailed commentary, music to songs, besides, the reader is frequently referred to other editions: sometimes to editions established in the more auspicious days of the 1920s and 30s. The aim of the Cambridge series is comparatively modest: to provide decent, serviceable, middle-weight editions for a general academic market. In meeting this aim the editors are, by and large, successful. Peter Holland, for example, the author of an original and challenging book on Restoration drama, has brought on sound, alert, up-to-date edition of William Wycherley's yet (as he would perhaps by the first to admit) his is not an edition that in any way supersedes the editions of Arthur Friedman or Gerald Weales. Other editors are in a sense more fortunate, in having less in the way of recent competition: Michael Cordner's Etherege is especially welcome in providing the first collection of the plays since Brett-Smith's in 1927.

No one will be jailed or (one hopes) ruined by this enterprise, which, like the original Mermaids, gives enlarged currency to the best plays of the old dramatists. Whether the new series will have the impact or the staying-power of that earlier series, however, is quite another question.

Theatre in the Age of Irving by George Russell (189pp. Basil Blackwell, £4.95. 0 351 10711 5), first published in 1981 as part of the Drama and Theatre Studies series, is now in paperback for the first time. The author combines a concise biography of Henry Irving with an account of the stage tradition which he inherited and developed. His claims on behalf of Irving are uncompromising: chapter one begins, "Rare is the actor who in a single night makes himself not merely famous but foremost in his profession. In the annals of the English theatre three names stand unchallenged for such an achievement: David Garrick as Richard III; Edmund Kean as Shylock; and Henry Irving as Mathias in *The Bells*." There are sections devoted to the plays of W. S. Gilbert, the rise of the actor-manager, and the fortunes of melodrama, and also seventeen black-and-white illustrations, many of them depicting scenes from the Victorian stage.

Why the editor of a supposedly modernized text should indulge a readiness for certain typographical archaisms and express impatience with others is not made clear. The text that emerges is a curiosity. Here, for example, is a moment from the second act of *Love for Love*: Miss Prue is delightedly describing the delicious perfume worn by Mr Tottle. This is how Herbert Davis prints the exchange in his 1967 University of Chicago edition:

Miss Prue. — Smell him Mother—
Madam, I mean—No give me this Ring for a kiss.
Tattle. O ho Miss, you must not kiss and tell.
Miss Prue. — Yes; I may tell my Mother—And he says he'll give me something to make me smell so. Oh, pray lend me your Handkerchief—Smell, Cousin; he says he'll give me something that



A drawing by Hogarth of a scene from Congreve's play The Old Bachelor.

Trotter, and the fat Mrs Pix, all need attention. Sumner's whole zest, entirely untouched by critical (or for that matter commercial) considerations, retains a curious quality of burdened innocence: to understand L. C. Knights' and equally wholesale dismissal of Restoration comedy in 1937 as "trivial, gross and dull", one needs to remember what he was up against. Needless to say, Sumner's grander editorial vision remains unfulfilled. Definitive editions of the works of the philosophical Mrs Trotter and the fat Mrs Pix are still (so to speak) awaited, while several of Sumner's own confidently announced projects, along with the promised third volume of Brett-Smith's Etherege, have failed to see the light of day.

Over the past twenty-five years, the editing of Restoration and pre-Restoration drama has proceeded on quite different lines. Issuing at high prices and infrequent intervals from the university press are those magisterial editions with full textual and scholarly apparatus, destined for the library shelves: Arthur Friedman's 1979 Oxford edition of Wycherley (say) is an admirable example of this kind. Occupying another and busier place in the market are the various series which aim to present well-annotated editions of single plays often at a price within the means of an individual purchaser: the Revels series, for example, which began life in the late 1950s, and the New Mermaids and Regency series, which date from the mid-1960s. Despite variations in editorial quality and a regrettable overlap in the titles selected for editorial treatment, these series continue to fulfill a useful function.

Yet neither the New Mermaids nor any of their rivals have entirely usurped the place of the original Mermaids, which provided at reasonable cost not single texts but generous collections of the best work of particular dramatists from the reign of Elizabeth to that of Queen Anne.

will make my Smocks smell this way—Is it not pure?—It's better than Lavender munn—I'm resolv'd I won't let Nurse put any more Lavender among my Smocks—ha, Cousin?
Mrs Frail. Fie, Miss; amongst your Linnen, you must say—You must never say Smock.

Now here is Henderson:

Miss Prue. — Smell him Mother—
Madam, I mean. He gave me this Ring for a kiss.

Tattle. O fie, Miss, you must not kiss and tell.

Miss Prue. — Yes; I may tell my Mother—And he says he'll give me something to make me smell so. Oh, pray lend me your Handkerchief—Smell, Cousin; he says he'll give me something that will make my Smocks smell this way. Is it not pure?—It's better than Lavender, munn. I'm resolv'd I won't let Nurse put any more Lavender among my Smocks—ha, Cousin?

Mrs Frail. Fie, Miss; amongst your Linnen, you must say. You must never say Smock.

The quarto punctuation as shown in Davis's text is not devised specially to reveal the qualities of Miss Prue's speech and mind—the punctuation is like this most of the time—but at such a moment its freedom perfectly conveys the headlong, random progress of Miss Prue's new-found enthusiasms. Under Henderson's stronger pointing this freedom is checked, and Miss Prue encouraged to order her breathing and her thoughts: the dynamic of the early punctuation is broken, while its random quaintness are preserved.

A series of this kind, aiming to offer (as a rule) four plays per volume at a price not wholly beyond the hopes of student buyers, places certain obvious constraints upon its editors. The annotation of these editions is often necessarily sparser than one would ideally like. For detailed commentary, music to songs, besides, the reader is frequently referred to other editions: sometimes to editions established in the more auspicious days of the 1920s and 30s. The aim of the Cambridge series is comparatively modest: to provide decent, serviceable, middle-weight editions for a general academic market. In meeting this aim the editors are, by and large, successful. Peter Holland, for example, the author of an original and challenging book on Restoration drama, has brought on sound, alert, up-to-date edition of William Wycherley's yet (as he would perhaps by the first to admit) his is not an edition that in any way supersedes the editions of Arthur Friedman or Gerald Weales. Other editors are in a sense more fortunate, in having less in the way of recent competition: Michael Cordner's Etherege is especially welcome in providing the first collection of the plays since Brett-Smith's in 1927.

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After grief and death

Valentine Cunningham

LAWRENCE DURRELL

Sebastian or Ruling Passions
202pp. Faber. £7.95.
0 571 13111 5

This fourth volume in Lawrence Durrell's fine *Avignon* or *Provencal* quartet is still a fiction of the middle of things; but only just. It begins at an end-point, at the end of the Second World War, with the smooth assembly of key units of a now familiar cast, the Prince, Affad, Constance, Felix Chatto, the writers Blanford and Sutcliffe. In the company of other survivors from previous volumes they're despatched to Geneva for sorting out, almost like the mails (and, indeed, one key strand of this novel concerns what happens to a letter sent to Affad in Geneva), before being posted on at the end in Avignon, there to await the Durrellian Last Things, in his and their final tome. The narrative's pace and inventiveness are flagging not at all. No signs of wear and tear are visible. In fact, verve and dash seem to be increasing as Durrell sniffs the final straight. But still, this is the penultimate volume, and tidying and tying up have evidently begun.

Not that you should expect things that were previously a bit murky to be made specially clearer hereabouts. The Prince and Affad are still heavily into a set of gnostic practices and Manichaean beliefs whose doctrinal outlines never got rescued from obscurity in earlier volumes, and don't get clarified much here. The novelists Blanford and Sutcliffe are still occasionally made the occasion of some Chinese-boxing in the cause of fictional self-reflectiveness. But *Sebastian* is simpler than its predecessors. For a start the cast has thinned and cootines in *Sebastian* to thin out which makes the visibility of Durrell's by and large stopped trying to fill us in on the details of the Egyptian hermetic arcana. And he has also largely abandoned modish nortology-within-narrative and goes in here for what he's still astonishingly good at - an older-fashioned brand of storytelling. And all this simplifying isn't at all disagreeable in its effects.

Doctrinal subjects haven't, of course, gone away altogether. The debate, for instance, between Affad's Eastern, Greekish cultism and

Constance's Western psychiatric medicine is still being vigorously mounted. But the ideas and the mongers of ideas are being continually forced to give place to the ennetments, the practical results of ideas. Jewish idealists, Christian theologians, all sorts of mystical bags of tricks, come in for a good deal of scathing, especially from Constance's colleague Dr Schwarz. He can't stand Jewish talkers, or jargonizers or Left Bank intellectuals and all their ilk. (He stogles out for dispraise Lacan as well as Sartre - which makes him in 1945 a pretty well-read shrink.) And what beliefs do to people is now the central issue. The chickens are coming home to roost. The murderous Menemidist stokes up the novel's distresses on reading from Constance's copy of the Bible. Affad's cultic death-wishes end in something no reader has trouble understanding: his death. The autistic son of Affad and poor demented Lily (we see her as an epistemic hermit shut away in a Coptic monastery, and eventually hear tell of her as a skeletal survivor of a death-camp), a boy whose mental state has made a grim emblem of the earlier novels' labyrinthine complexities, is brought back to tears, smiles and speech through Constance's ministrations. And not because of any bookish wisdom or acquired psychiatric skills, but because she chances to start wearing Lily's brand of perfume (*Jamais de la Vie* it's called, with some pointfulness).

Deaths accumulate in this novel against a background of wider wartime horrors. Criminal violence is all about. But Durrell's tone remains astonishingly unoppressed, and unoppressive. It's as if this central resurrection of Affad's son into fuller humanness, and the light and love of Constance's surrogate motherhood, prove pervasively redemptive. Deaths, comings, murder, suicide, become much more bearable in its vicinity. Suddenly, and without the previous ponderous monumentalism of the earlier volumes, the confrontation with death might be all about, seems to come clear. After grief and death, resurrection and life. The quincunx turns into a kind of divine comedy. Or just a comedy. At any rate a comedy of Durrell's own kind, unselfish, blasphemous possibly, marvelously loud-mouthed in its sustained scurrility.

Sebastian has at least five great narrative set-pieces. Again and again, one is made think that Durrell really can tell a story, and command his

narrative tones. The stabling of Affad, Schwarz's suicide, the escape of Menemidist from Schwarz's clinic (he carries up his brawny bodyguard, gets out in his girth, seduces a baker's van-boy in this religious rite), the recovery of the autistic: these events switch the novel about from gothic, to real nightmare, to grim ludicrousness, to love and affirmation with astonishing ease. But no incident is more compelling, or more wonderfully alleviating either within this novel or within the quincunx thus far, than the fabulously absurd downfall of Lord Galen. Appointed Coordinator of Culture for the Western Powers this old philistine is desperately endeavouring to get clued up. He reels about Geneva in shock from reading *Ulysses*, gets debauched on swigs of American novel, and comes to final glorious grief on a cross in a lurid brothel to which he's resorted because it's rumoured to have a very cultured madame. Jewish intellectualism, guilty religious inheritances, the whole clutch of thinking persons' bookish perplexities that oppress so many of Durrell's people, all collapse with Galen - lashed to his crucifix and graffitied all over by the whores' lipsticks (so like the penises of esgar log-dogs, it's said) - in a scene of gently convoluted, foul-mouthed and foul-minded farcicality.

But good and cheering as this scene is, the attractions of Durrell aren't limited to that sort of thing. Rather, what incites admiration is his variety of touch, his refusal to settle oppressively into a single register, mode or mood, which have never been better demonstrated than here. And it's a demonstration, in effect, of the necessity, survival and continuing power of language and fictions - his own and his characters'. Words and texts are, of course, shown to have their problems in this novel as elsewhere in the quincunx. Intellectuals are just contriving a Babel, we're told. Several times the complete is made of philosophy that it is destroying itself. In a vain semantizing, Constance meditates at the end on the feebleness of language to "circumscribe the inexpressible bitterness of death and separation. And love, if you wish." But "Mr Schwarz he dead" a black stretcher-bearer reports, still clinging in that awful moment to words. And to texts, for his line is sunk into somebody's reading of Conrad even so grievous, so silencing a moment. It's an instructive as well as a greatly moving effect.

One is made think that Durrell really can tell a story, and command his

The curse on the balloon

Brian Morton

GEORGE MACBETH

Anna's Book
278pp. Cape. £7.95.
0 224 02113 3

In 1897, the Swedish Colonel S. A. Andree and two companions, Knut Frænkel and Nils Strindberg, repave the playground set out to traverse the Arctic ice by hydrogen balloon, availing the exploits of the Norwegian Andree and his son, the first of the Andree expedition, and began one of the most mysterious of aviation, much discussed by Bernadette Triangle experts and "kited" only recently in "the previously uncollected" documents from which George Macbeth has taken much of the detail of his novel.

Andree's book, combined with Nils Strindberg's diary of the fatal night with the recollections of his daughter Anna, Chaffier, whose life has been two summers before the expedition. Anna's account of their eccentric clubship is alternated with Strindberg's own words, recovered from the last thirty years after his death by a Thomas, sea captain and fellowed to Anna in her Scottish exile.

Although the narrative is shared equally and the most dramatic experiences are Strindberg's, this is

very much Anna's book. Scientific exploration is made to seem little more than an exercise in national rivalry and, crucially, in sexual politics. As a woman, Anna is excluded from the flight, despite that, she dominates its preparation. By entering the balloon's gondola while it is still in its shed, she brings down the sailor's and airman's superstition on the flight. Her sexual presence is constantly being set against the detachment of the men who surround her; before her engagement to Strindberg, she attends his lecture on the construction of the balloon, a lecture which is a low-pitched rant out of place among the stern old men of the Stockholm Academy. As the lecture progresses, she is attacked with sudden, menstrual cramps and is forced to leave her seat, watching from the doorway at the back.

By having Anna left on the fringes of history and science Macbeth draws a sharp, way superior to the scientific endeavours of the expedition, and it is her dreams that the expedition takes shape and is foretold. From the balloon, the carcasses of slaughtered seals on ice floes resemble spots of menstrual blood on a sheet; every experience in Anna's life is matched by a moment on the journey north and the parallelism between the two narratives is maintained throughout. The novel comes closest to making a "didactic point" when Anna tries to force Strindberg to propose marriage by claiming that she has agreed to marry an ailing Scottish heart surgeon. Of

Hume: the name, the profession and the fading vitality contrast sharply with Anna's own tremendous vigour and spontaneity.

The balloon hovers over the story, an obscene and sinister presence, echoing elements in Anna's life. It is a womb; it resembles the condoms which village boys pass to her in order to watch her shocked reaction; too early prototype is cut up and the silk distributed to be turned into tablecloths, the symbol of the Charles's gentle domesticity; finally, the great canopy becomes, around the release of the gas and the fatal end of the voyage, a vast, obvious way the kind of loosening of repressions that the expedition has brought about. Andree carries about pornographic cards (when every spare cause causes problems); Andree and Frænkel become a "couple", uxorious and self-obsessed; petty jealousies and nationalistic pique take over as the three Swedes struggle for survival on the ice.

Macbeth is foremost a poet and his novel is the lineage, the dream-like story, full of mirrored events, repetitions and potentia works on the mind rather than the way that poetry does. The prose, Macbeth's, has seldom allowed his intellectualism in prose or verse to outweigh his concern for the concrete issues of science, sexuality and history. *Anna's Book* is a remarkable examination of our sexual and political prejudices and the notion of heroism in a thoroughly unheroic world.

Dangerous Play

Frances. You were the favoured son they never had - a natty boy, Frankie-boy, collar and tie through the garden gates each early morning. Not too far though -

be careful. Your father's voice was the ghost of the terrace roses, his uniform studded behind slithering leaves. I promise... only as far as the road. If he could hear

he would think you meant Cairo Road, and hopscotch in sight of the settlers'. At eight, when his sluggish official car ferried him down to Government House

any old chalky grid was a sign of you, your flat-clenched stammering dance flicking and juddering round in his head like a handkerchief waving good-bye.

Or so you imagine it now. Or so you say, when you're telling me late in bed, and sleepy enough to confuse what was with what you're beginning to dream.

All Africa knew how the settlers behaved. Why should he think I was safe with them? "Cut them in half, you'll find mostly gain" - I can hear him still. "They're out and outers."

What did they find when the Earl was killed, I wonder? What kind of blood did he bleed? You were going to smile, but a sigh catches you out, and as simple as that

you're asleep, quickly swivelling round in my arms so it seems you are trying to shake yourself free. I click off the light, and at once, with my eyes shut, I can see you again, crumpling close at my side

when we stop on a stretch of moonlit road and discover the Earl, who ever he was, with his head crammed through his knees on the floor of our car, his evening dress speckled with glass. Listen:

that's the Savoy Orpheans, fox-trotting out from a wireless dumped on his passenger seat, and the car itself is climbing a sandstone rock like a toy someone pretended could dance.

It might be bad luck, we are hoping, he's drunk, but an accident wouldn't explain this goosy hold in the core of his ear where you show me a bullet went in.

Not that you're with me for long. When you say I'll go some help. Stop put, you've already gone, your do like a tongue slipped over your shoulder, leaving me wandering stupidly round and round

on scruffy grass by the car. I am guessing there must be evidence here. Footprints? A cartridge case? But each step I take explodes and disperses a cloud of dust

until I can scarcely be sure which footprints are innocent: which ones are mine, which yours, and which, supposing any are his, might be the killer's - and whether or not

I should pay any heed to this dry emphatic whisper which says out of nowhere: "Don't look in the car. Don't look at the Earl. It's as if I were dreaming and could not control what I saw. As if I might find

his face had been changed into one that I knew, or into my own, and could never be turned back to a stranger's again - not even by balfitting up in the bed beside you like this, reminding myself

I am home, completely awake, and seeing you still with your beautiful boyish face on the pillow marked by your hair, but clearly smiling at something you will not remember tomorrow, which I cannot think

Andrew Motion

Acknowledgements are due to James Fox, whose book *White Mischief* provided some of the material for this poem.

Continuing destinies, upholstered uppers

David Profumo

J. P. DONLEVY

Leila
480pp. Allen Lane. £8.95.
0 199 1171 9

"More. I tell you I want more. More of the same, when?" Thus, the cackling Danglefield to O'Keefe in Donlevy's stage version of *The Ginger Man* (1959); and it might, sadly, have served as an appropriate motto for much of his subsequent work which, since the early 1950s, has often seemed like a series of repeat performances. This sense of repetition is particularly strong in *Leila*, partly because it is a sequel to *Darcy Dancer* (1977), a book which in spirit belonged anyway to the earlier phase, characterized by the alliterative titles and evocative Irish settings. Throughout this sequel there is an unmistakable impression of straining for effect, a slightly desperate attempt to revive his earlier, more lyrical style of writing that was clubbed to death by the coarseness of the singularly disappointing *Schultz* (1980), the point where comic exuberance finally gave way to crudity.

As its full title - *The Destinies of Darcy Dancer, Gentleman* - suggested, the original was designed to follow the fortunes of an opportunistic hero in a sort of eighteenth-century fashion, a pious young "imperialist" member of the "aristocracy" who, by the end of the novel, had come to some wisdom about the vagaries of the world. Leaving his collapsing ancestral pile, Andromeda Park, Dancer takes to the road, enjoys a variety of colourful experiences in Dublin, goes broke, and is saved by good fortune at the races. Such in effect is the shape of *Leila* too, though he is now a year older, and correspondingly more tough; the

estate is well and truly dilapidated, and the house overrun with wildlife - vulpine rats hunt the housemaids, there are Gothicky bats in the moonlit ballroom. The prospect is Donlevy's perennial one of the upper classes on their uppers.

Dancer himself, extravagant as ever, is the focus of both the novel's narrative voices; first and third person. With ornate and style he inspires the loyalty of his beleaguered retainers as he struggles to maintain Andromeda Park against the depredations of creditors, sponging houseguests and bizarre neighbours. Dispirited by such a life and nearly sick, he goes to Dublin and gets embroiled in a seamy bohemian underworld, and he looks up a number of old acquaintances; living off credit all the while. Saved by another windfall, he returns home, presumably to start the process all over again.

For the most part, the cast is a familiar one. There's Sexton the gardener, a pottering polymath; Rashers Ronald, the irrepressible sort; useful Lolo, the portlandist of poodles; the Mental Marquis, of gargantuan appetites; and alcoholic Crooks, a butler in the fine Donlevian tradition of Bitters, Boats, and Smeas. Amongst such a gaggle of pious and parasites one character stands alone - Leila, the raven-haired new serving girl, a mysterious orphan, almost spectral in her presence, an alluring beauty instantly idolized by Dancer though, uniquely, eluding his grasp. Both modest and refined, she is however, an entirely improbable creation in a world where most of the other figures are possessed of the morals of a blowfly. It is a milieu upholstered with snobbery and selfishness, a pack of characters all jostling together for the pursuit of foxes, fortunes and, of course, sex.

And, by God, they're off. Darcy

Dancer now in one impeccable costume, then another. The desirable Miss von B. back again and felling him most thirstily on the hunting-field. Where, too, one meets with Count MacBuzaranti the former dancing-master, smelling of lilac. And Crooks goes to Mollie Dingbats, then makes an attempt on his own life. In the butler's suicide room. Clad in female underwear. The Mad Marquis opening champagne with a sob. In a state of unpardonable tumescence. Then in Dublin, the low life. One's usual embarrassment, ha ha, at being totally unable to pay one's hotel bills. Continuing to magnificently split one's infinitives. Coitus most energetic. Page after page. And one does so wish. He would know when to stop.

J. P. Donlevy has published at least two novels that are very good, but *Leila* is not one of them. To be fair, there are places where the old fire flashes, but these serve rather as reminders of what has gone - that air of comic improvisation, and the interweaving of zaniness with pathos. At certain things he is still incomparably good: the dialogue often retains its poise, specialties being inventive and the retort indignant, as readers of *The Unexpurgated Code* (1975) will remember. The quality of his insults remains abysmally high. But the one-liners are crammed into scenes that are frequently no better than laborious slapstick, and the farce is often overblown. Devotees may applaud the recurrence of certain perennial features (sumptuous breakfasts, luxurious shops, quivering erections) but others, by the end, are liable to feel stuffed full, even hung-over.

In the past, Donlevy's descriptive ability has also operated in a gentler, less clamorous direction; he was especially good at nostalgic reflection, on childhood, a family's past, the history of place. His dismembered

sentences can be effective units of recollection, achieving (as in *Balthazar B*) a real poignancy that nicely balances the humour. In *Leila*, such instances are rare. The sentimental focus is on the girl herself, Dancer's guiding light, but so remote and insubstantial a character is she that this can only be managed at the expense of a certain unpalatable meekness: "But there is one more thing I want to say. With all my heart. With all my soul and with all my sins. Even as I know my already spoken words one by one have closed all the little gates that lead to the garden of your heart. And all I went to say.

Is
Love
You."

The Eighties, darling

Stephen Pickles

ADAM MARS-JONES

Me West Is Dead: Recent Lesbian and Gay Fiction
312pp. Faber. £10 (paperback, £3.50).
0 571 13022 4

BARRY NONWEILER

That Other Realm of Freedom
324pp. Gay Men's Press. Paperback, £4.50.
0 90704 019 5

PETER HAZELDINE

Raptures of the Deep
182pp. Brilliance Books. £7.95.
0 94618 910 2

Gay fiction is minority stuff. But *Queerle de Brest* and *The Well of Loneliness* can now be bought at Liberty's, so mainstream culture seems to have caught up with the fact that not all gay literature need be published in Paris and sold to a brown paper bag. That Faber should publish a collection of Recent Lesbian and Gay Fiction is an enlightened move in the right direction. The point is that it is recent as well as gay. The title, *Me West Is Dead*, announces its modernness, and the quality of its contents is very high indeed. Not that there should be any hint of patronization or surprise in saying so. We have known for some time that homosexuals can be very sensitive and talented people. Yet in the "straight" literary tradition there are thousands of classics; in its gay counterpart there are few. Theirs is as much notoriety as fame.

Homosexual behaviour is now an open book, largely due to American influence, and as subject matter it is no longer a guarantee of elitist status. Nevertheless, it is hard to find it well written about. The problem is not only one of decorum. Homosexuality remains a subculture, with its own language, and in its writings reveals a mysterious world more interesting to the anthropologist than the common reader, who would tend to dismiss such literature as fiction. When he reads a gay novel he knows (he thinks) that the author is homosexual, whereas mysteries are written not by murderers, but by Oxford dons.

Mary gay novels are badly written exercises in the importance of being earnest. There wants the illusion of truth, the style and talent to create it. Frustration dogmatizes inspiration and the writer's pen is no more eloquent than when it scribbles lewd paragraphs in lewdly outbursts. Or there is an old-fashioned stab at the poet to style, with boys holding hands gazing at the stars, wondering what to do next; there was far too much of that in *Edmund White's* over-praised *A Boy's Own Story*. There is a similar mealy-mouthed misery in Barry Nonweiler's *That Other Realm of Freedom*, a novel which effectively fails to transcend the secrets of soft-porn and watched, confessional literature. There are some humorous exchanges, but the principal element in the novel's repertoire is a series of bitter-sweet adverbs: "almost humbly", "almost enthusiastically", "apologetically", "awkwardly", "almost sheepishly". "struggling unsuccessfully".

This is cheap stuff, and forces the reader's hand, a case of "Curtains. Tears. Applause. Royalties." as the stage direction goes at the end of the play, *A Singular Man* (1964).

As did *Darcy Dancer*, this novel ends on a deliberately unresolved note, and one feels that we haven't yet heard the last of it; that the author could go on spinning this material out almost indefinitely, shearing it off every few years or so in similar arbitrary lengths. That would be a shame, because however enjoyable it may be in places *Leila* is not an ambitious book, and its subject-matter has by now demonstrably exhausted itself. Even Donlevy can conjure only so much candylfloss from a mere handful of crystals.

Simon with surprising vigour. "Hey, you're very violent." "Thn't no violence, that's passion." "Julius gives the lie to most of the emotions in this novel. He gets 'lots of sex but no love'. This kind of flippancy is better fodder for a fringe play, where its tone of voice might coax the laughs more skilfully. The plight of Simon the Glaswegian needs more restraint to win our interest and care. Life's rich tapestry is all very well, but gay life here is rich at the expense of irony.

In the short stories of *Me West Is Dead* irony flourishes to advantage. In "The Loveliness of the Long-Distance Runner", Sera Matland's technical skill is as important as what is actually said. Two lesbians, one an athlete in a marathon, the other at home, reflect on different things. The runner concentrates in kielbas, her lover mopes in conventional typ-face. She is trying not to think of the other, who is concentrating far too hard to think of her. Jealousy during absence and harmony at reunion. Simple and profound; after all, the lesbianism is a small detail among so many telling ones. "Some of These Days" tells of a young man's hopeless search for his landlord, his only friend, after coming out of prison. He begs and starves in order to frequent gay porn cinemas where the landlord might be. He cannot even remember the landlord's name, and after being taken, straight-jacketed, to an institution, is allowed to write on a few sheets of paper what we read. James Purdy's story is a brief tragedy of low life, which if another celebrates nor criticizes - only tells in its victim's words after the search for "his lord" fails. *Me West Is Dead* should be read for stories like these; the homosexual strain in them is neither a dreary self-reflective moan, nor the special shyness of being Glad to be Gay. For gay readers it will come as a surprise, as it did older Adam Mars-Jones' critics. He contributes a rather laid-back introductory essay which refreshes one's notion of literary criticism without demonstrating its necessity.

In the same collection there is a bizarre and finely written story by Peter Hazeldine, who has also written a novel, *Raptures of the Deep*. Hazeldine's subject to a Manchester boy, and the temptation to take a slice of life often conquers where there is muck and bress. But Hazeldine's accomplishments as a short story writer do not desert him. At times the complex time-scheme irritates, and there are moments when preciousness pops in a metaphor, with careful aplomb. But with admirable skill, he almost tops down the story of David, and achieves one remarkable effect among many similar ones: sexual experiences, though seen in natural things, only loosely tethered to the contingent facts of David's upbringing or his being homosexual. When a dog barks in the night, or a ball bounces against a wall, landscape and feeling are momentarily defined. The rest is silence. The homosexual ego need not be a noisy theatrical scream. It can have an ordinary tone of voice - other all. These are the Eighties, darling, Mac West is dead."

Handwritten note in right margin: "The Well of Loneliness"

commentary

A comedy of embarrassment

Alan Jenkins

HAROLD PINTER
Betrayal
Various cinemas

Betrayal is the word. Robert may have betrayed his wife Emma with other women for years, Emma betrays him with Jerry, Robert's best friend (as Robert is his); who thereby betrays Robert and his wife Judith (who never appears - the stinky girl is constantly and conveniently on night-duty as a doctor). Both couples have "kids". The three sides of the triangle are successful as the world goes, educated (Oxbridge), middle-class, creatively employed people, leading lives of quiet desperation, two of them damned because they are not aware of it. Robert's superior knowledge - of the others' movements, of his own despair, of the hollowing at the heart of their every transaction - makes him the most powerful of the three (sometimes with a barely suppressed ferocity that elicits from Ben Kingsley in this film version of Harold Pinter's 1978 play, some astonishing business with the facial muscles). He is not the less vulnerable to real pain and loss (where the others are insulated against it; in Emma's case by her own beauty, in Jerry's by vacuity) for that.

The film follows the play's chronology, back-tracking in time (apart from two temporal close-ups as our gaze is arrested and fixed on three moments of consequence, three crises, of revelation, false revelation and attempted, but failed, revelation), through nine years of sexual shenanigans, deception, lies, quarrels, petty compromise and patently incestuous and narcissistic to the moment's surrender that begins the whole ghastly charade, with a wit and expressive economy that recall, if faintly, Samuel Beckett's *Play*. Pinter's skeletal treatment of Europe's Great Theme is not as refined, or as rich, as Beckett's; his dissection retains more flesh, but less fleshiness. The director

David Jones has even specified the *Habitations*: Highgate for literary agent Jerry, Hammersmith (a smart square, though, one that has "come up" for publisher Robert; trusts between the "lovers" take place in a rented flat in Kilburn. "Who ever went to Kilburn in those days?" "Just you and me.")

The placing, like the careful attention to what little circumstantial detail we are given, is not irrelevant, but it is not terribly important either. We see the kind of houses such people would be likely to live in, we see two of them on holiday in Venice, where they would be likely to go, two others at a lunch of the kind they would be likely to have; we hear of one reading Yeats to himself on Torello, another who takes regular trips to the US and is an adept discoverer of literary talent, yet another who finds that the demands of running a gallery leave her less and less time for those of her afternoon man. There is a comedy of embarrassment lurking in Jones's interpretation, with all that implies by way of satisfyingly discomfiting cross-fertilization for a (presumed) middle-class and (probably) venal audience; but if we squirm and wince it is not only with recognition, or at the accuracy of social portrayal. We are very far from Mike Leigh territory, and not merely for having moved up-market. Everything in the film is simultaneously embarrassing, painfully funny and horribly pitiful, and the source of such effects - as it always is with this most exact and exacting of writers - is in the timing and weighting of phrases, or more particularly, here, of clichés. (The *mis-en-scène* too are clichés, but so is any *mis-en-scène*.)

All three betrayers are trapped in them, and their betrayals - every manoeuvre for possession of self or other - betray most of all themselves, how little they know of self or other, how total is their helpless reliance on the exchange of clichés, their inability to move without them; the lovers only ever manage to talk of their respective spouses and "kids", Robert bangs out relentlessly about squash. The slow

cooling to mutual aversion and reconfirmation reveals less a *folie de grandeur* than unthinking filly, but Pinter neither judges nor pities; he stands much too far back for that, and his passion is purely analytical.

All this is filmed with exquisite precision and unostentatious decorum by a camera that moves very close to the actors' faces, catching every flicker. (The very first, scene, silent scene, suggesting the final breakdown of negotiations between Emma and Robert, has been added to the original script, presumably, by Pinter, who wrote the screenplay, and there is an unnecessary lingering over the final, heavily ironic image of the adulterers entwined, wedding-ringed hands, a snatched moment of romantic complicity at the beginning of their affair and the end of the film, where the chill of retrospect and the knowledge of this one moment's consequences seems overstated). Jeremy Irons as Jerry is studiously feeble, Patricia Hodge coolly beautiful, Ben Kingsley bursts with farcically healthy strength stripped of its opportunistic, and positively twinkles with a near-madman's sadistic understanding that all the same never allows him to control as much he thinks he does. None of them puts a foot wrong.

The British Library has announced the publication, in thirty volumes, of *A Comprehensive Index of Manuscripts in the British Library*. The first volume will be published in spring 1984, and publication of all thirty will be completed by the end of 1984. Each volume will be about 800 pages in length and will contain approximately 400,000 entries, arranged alphabetically. At present a comprehensive search of the Manuscript Collection can involve consulting over thirty catalogues and indexes. Further information concerning the publication can be obtained from Hugh Cobbe, Reference Division Publications, The British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG, or Chadwyck-Healey Ltd, 20 Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8DT.

The background and the book

Peter Kemp

Book Four
Channel 4

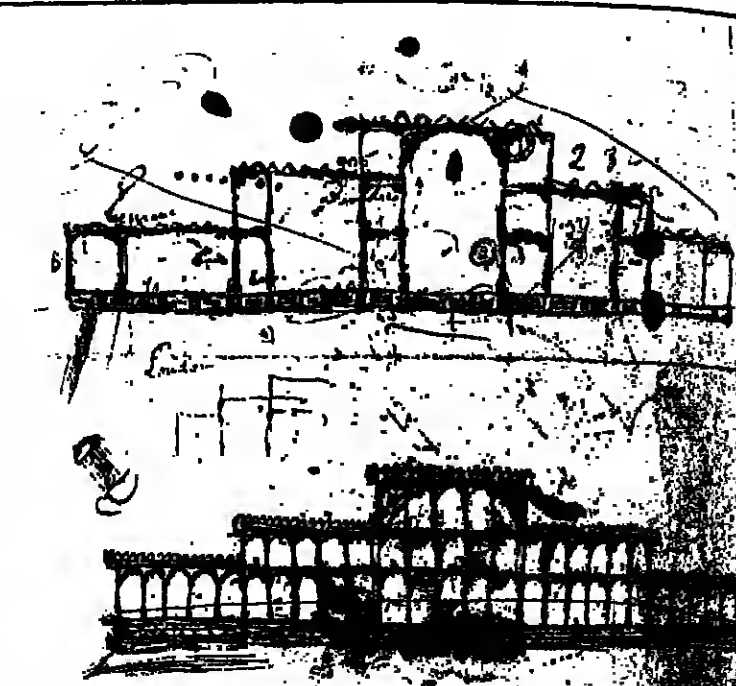
Book Four now splits itself in three. Each programme offers a trio of items: a discussion of a book that has recently been published; an out-and-about investigation of "what books people are reading at the moment"; a commentary on selected paperbackbacks. This varied format has, so far, proved varying success, with the opening section standing out as easily the most substantial. In the first two programmes, the books given prominence were Salman Rushdie's *Shame* and Mary Stewart's *The Wicked Day*, respectively. The authors, when interviewed, were informatively pertinent, then with the bringing in of studio guests, the discussion shifted its focus to often on-book programmes, instead of being homed-in upon the novel itself as bookish matter towards other topics. Tario Ali, for instance, rapidly steered the studio talk away from *Shame* and into Pakistani politics. Though the prominent similarities between Rushdie's fictional world and Pakistan had already been noted in the interview, subsequent debate covered the same ground so repeatedly that the novel was left virtually flattened into a political diagram.

In the second programme, the transition from book to background was effected more smoothly, and didn't entail sliding so far away from literature. After talking with Mary Stewart about her handling of the Arthurian legend in *The Wicked Day*, Hermione Lee surveyed the treatment

this material has received in other periods, and brought to Michael Wood to cast light on its Dark Ages origins. Affable and formidably factual, he briskly turned over the historical evidence for Arthur's existence, demonstrating its spuriousness; even a one-line reference in an early text has been exposed as a later plant. Perhaps the most eye-opening fact in Wood's account, however, was his incidental revelation that, for some people, "the matter of Britain" still very much matters to Britain. After impugning Arthur's authenticity on an earlier occasion, Wood recounted, he was taken to task by Christopher Booker for dispelling belief in "this great myth that binds us all together" just when it is most needed in "declining Britain". Since the Arthur legend is itself a chronicle of ultimate decline, it's hard to see how it could supply the lasting parables, prop, or "mythic" that the programme is turning to. The Arthurian writers, from Malory to *Monty Python* and the *Holy Grail* - the story has proved remarkably tenacious, with the once and future king continually popping up in varying guises. While the diversity of Arthurian writings was quickly established, though, not much time was given to an investigation of any of them. The commentary galloped past *The Iliad* of the King, for instance, with not much more than fleeting reference to the poem's being typically Victorian in offering religious allegory and a "spiritualized" Arthur. But Tennyson's version is surely even more of its era than the Welsh legends as God's Viceroy and the king as an administrative elite - going abroad on tours of duty, putting down obstacles to progress (barbaric local chieftains, beasts, and legends). Improving

communications and imposing their law - it often resembles a pageant version of the Indian Civil Service. A mine of information about Arthur, Michael Wood came up with some persuasive hypotheses: is that the Victorian urge to establish the King's historical credentials might owe something to Schlegel's activities - apparently uncovering archaeological foundations for national myths - in Troy and Mycenae. After the engrossing nature of this item, the programme's dip into its middle section - a random spot-check on people's reading - came as especially anti-climatic. Occasionally, a famous face appears here, as when Ken Livingstone rather pluckily divulged that his favourite book deals with an anarchic society on the moon. But, generally, nothing more is proffered than an arbitrary sequence of people in a library, as if they've liked it. Alister MacLean, for instance, is asked: "It's a section of *Book Four* that might valuably be shelved."

The closing feature is more interesting. Invited to comment on science fiction paperbackbacks, Kingsley Amis was at first pertinaciously unhelpful - "I don't know, it's a very important question" - but Hermione Lee promptly pointed out that he might be familiar with the work of Barbara Cartland, and eventually succeeded in tugging some insights out of him. By contrast, Humphrey Carpenter, the following week, was a valuable go-to-to any interviewer. Riffing cracklingly and teasingly through his paperback backlog, he allowed that asking him to talk about "ideas" books was in itself an admirable notion.



Two blotted-paper sketches, showing a rough design for Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace as based on the Chatsworth Lily House. The original blotted paper is in the Albert: His Life and Work, an exhibition devoted to Prince Albert which is at the Royal College of Art until January 22.

Some local types

Alan Bell

The English Provincial Printer 1700-1800
British Library

The walls and showcases of the Crawford Room of the British Library are agreeably crowded with a very varied and entertaining exhibition, *The English Provincial Printer 1700-1800* (until January 31). Most of the exhibits come from the British Library's own holdings, but there are some loans from the archives of the old-established Banbury firm of Cheney & Co, and from the large album of the ephemeral work of J. Sprague of Tunbridge Wells, lent by the local museum. Sprague's scrapbooks, in which the labors of proofreaders, laundresses and clear-stitchers are jumbled with grand Assembly announcements for the Rooms, present a graphic survey of the day-to-day business and growing leisure market in a successful and expanding resort town of the period.

Elsewhere, he it in Cuttleton or Devizes or Sedgfield, we see a good deal of contemporary life, whether in chapbook distribution, circulating libraries, turnpike management, horse-riding, thief-taking, or the provincial stage. The various sections of the display seem however to be united by the patent medicine business, since nostrums of all kinds were one of the main subsidiary stocks in trade of the local stationer-printer. Pope's *Aromatic Chemical Mucilage* ("highly worth notice by all hard beards, tender faces, and those who wish to make one shaving go as far as two") took a whole page of grandiloquent patter to explain the excellences of this Bristol invention to the nobility and gentry. Sprague must have had a good market, among prosperous visitors to the Wells for his "Bacon of Peppermint for Cholicky Complaints, and Flatulencies", but worm cakes and rat powder were another important part of his business.

The exhibition is full of entertaining material, but its various diversions are all aimed at demonstrating the importance of the press - culturally, politically, and economically - as it spread throughout eighteenth-century provincial England. *Pastorals*, the enterprising and always interesting newsletter of the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue project, devotes its current issue to short articles on "Exeter galleys literature, on the Dorchester printer Lockett's stock of novels in his circulating library in 1790, and to the Kent almanac trade, together with notes on Liverpool and Gainsborough printings each article

sets its subject in a wider context. Typographically, too (though the exhibition generally avoids technical bibliographical commentary), greater sophistication shows how the provincial practitioners flourished when relieved of the restrictions that the dominance of the London and Oxbridge trade had imposed on them. English provincial typographical history beyond the traditional investigations of local antiquaries, is a relatively new study. The trade itself is only now acquiring the historical directness essential for further study, in which the work of the North-East Printing History Group has been a notable pioneer. Provincial publications great and small have long defied extensive analysis. Even so, perhaps especially - in the British Library group cataloguing made it difficult to locate individual items of interest: thus many low-embossed exhibits separated here for display found themselves under a bulk heading of "Manchester: Constabulary". The mine detailed work on the British Library's volumes of miscellaneous local material that work on the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue has allowed, has made this exhibition possible.

When the full coverage of British Library material of the ESTC period is made available for study towards the end of 1983 a vast amount of study information will be released for study with all the power and subtlety that a computer operation (if sensitive hands) can provide. The Library's coverage of its own holdings is only a start, for other county institutions (including many county record offices and local libraries) will add much more to an already wide-ranging record. The possibilities of this impressive engine holds for literary and historical studies are immense, but it is well to be reminded by the delightful exhibition that they can be fun.

Ironic locations

Alan Hollinghurst

RICHARD WAGNER
The Valkyrie
Coliseum

David Pountney's production of *The Valkyrie*, the first instalment of a new Ring for English National Opera, will give us his *Rhinegold* for another three-and-a-half years. *The Valkyrie* is, of course, the first night of the trilogy, as defined by Wagner; but in anything but a very literal production (such as Peter Hall's at Bayreuth this year) it needs the interpretative diagram of its "Vorabend", *Rhinegold*, to establish the thematic and ideological emphases. Without it, it can seem incoherent - as Pountney's production does.

All Maria Bjornson's *Valkyrie* designs are highly striking. Act 1 is set on the long, bare landing of a nationally Elizabethan country-house; the stairs, divided by the tree, rise to stage centre, and Fricka's ram's horns on the banisters are the only décor. Otherwise everything is blankly heavy: two doors, two fireplaces with white stone mantels, and two chairs, back to back. The effect is both austere and domestic, suggesting brutal rigours behind *nouveau-riche* affluence. In being with this, Hundung is to be an expensive, coldly violent figure, clad in black leather and exuding humiliating defiance from his wife. She, not surprisingly, is a bag of nerves, shuddering involuntarily at the mere sound of her husband's leitmotif. That his neurotic and claustrophobic interpretation, typical of Pountney, does not work is due in part to the

personalities of his male singers: Willard White's exceptionally warm and lyrical bass subverts his sketchy attempt at Hundung's character; and Alberto Rmedios, who sings with unfailing strength and beauty of tone, is fun, fun, genial, unharmed and unabashed as Siegmund. Moreover, the palsied slowness of Mark Elder's tempi is disastrously at odds with the spontaneity and fire of the music and with the histrionic *va-et-vient* of Josephine Barstow's reading of Sieglinde. As a result this most passionate act is perversely uninvolved, and the visual effects such as the lighting up of the ash like a Christmas tree at the advent of the sword-motif in scene 3 threaten to sabotage it altogether.

Any new production of the *Ring* has to reckon with Patrice Chéreau, and it is in Act 2 that Pountney most clearly expresses his debt; Chéreau set scene 1 in a kind of control-room in Valhalla, dominated by a gigantic pendulum; Pountney gives us a circular neo-classical library, First Empire in feel, its fore-stage reached from above by curved ramps which flank, as its equivalent *primum mobile*, a slowly revolving disc, reflected in mirrors and representing, perhaps, the world, that clanks and rattles as it goes round. (The idea is more or less stolen from Jonathan Miller's *Magical Flute*, also set in a library of the Enlightenment, but to less dubious effect - what Wotan *reads* is a question earlier producers have understandably shunned.) In the ENO programme much emphasis is placed on the antithesis in the *Ring* of love and power, and Wotan's role as blinkered battle-father, inciter to strife and glutton for power, is driven home impressively in Act 3. Is Pountney suggesting an intellectual dimension to

Wotan's will to supremacy: glossing the mythic inner conflict of the god with a modern image of man of war as man of taste; or alluding to Wagner's own breadth of culture and the prodigious assimilation and synthesis of it in his music-dramas? Either way, it is no help to the drama, as seems to be tacitly acknowledged on stage - at no point is anything done that alludes to or makes use of the setting as such. And as a fixed set for the act it limits the *Todesverkündigung* and the climactic conflict to the very small area of the central disc, symbolic of the mortal, as opposed to godly, sphere of action. The production attempts to exploit this by exaggerating Sieglinde's hallucinatory derangement, making her unable to see Siegmund who (unavoidably) stands just in front of her. It is a fashionably neurotic view of Wagner's heroines, and yet it seems curiously dated; interestingly, Sieglinde's convulsions follow almost exactly Wagner's own prescriptions as recorded by Porges.

The set for Act 3 sustains a hinted stylistic chronology in the designs: like Chéreau's *Ring* it gets more up-to-date as it progresses - Elizabethan, Napoleonic, modern, Fascist - occupying symbolic historic epochs. (The costumes, dissonant with each other and with the sets, seem to identify the characters with separate historical periods: Wotan, eighteenth-century; Fricka, Victorian wedding-dress; Sieglinde, Edwardian; Hundung, SS.) The Valkyries' Rock is a kind of magnetic mountain, a system of tilted, concentric and revolving rings, which give the impression of floating like a ship's compass. Inscribed on the rings are the names of dead heroes, and of the Valkyries who gather them for

Valhalla. Sustained by winged statuary, glittering black marble slabs carrying the necrology rise skywards. Photographs in the programme suggest that the heaven-searching lights are imitations of the illuminations of the Nibelung rallies. This is a totalitarian cenotaph, a monument to Wotan's violence, and an effectively ironic locust for his great scene of love with his errant daughter. And yet, as in the earlier acts, this interpretation fails to get the measure of it, almost bores us, despite the immensely charged nature of the material. Anthony Raffell's noble, carrying Wotan and a Brünnhilde in Marie Haywood Segal, standing in for a voiceless Linda Esther Gray, who does very well. Its error is to disregard the natural dynamics of Wagner's magnificently constructed scene: the image of the bellhose god, who has pushed the Valkyries around with his spear a few moments before, is far too easily abandoned. Throughout scene 3 Pountney gives us recurrent moments of near-rapprochement, with much physical contact. Brünnhilde snuggling up to her father's legs, attempting to hug him, and so on. This domestic treatment ruins the scale of the scene, fudges its terrible laying bare of heart and mind, and robs the moment of reversal, the culminating embrace, of its overwhelmingly ironic significance. For "These radiant, glorious eyes" Wotan actually has Brünnhilde sit down with him on the rock, as it might be for a little talk. It is a moment that is typically ungainly and fruitlessly contrary. This production resists the opera's outstanding sense of both passionate and intellectual inevitability; until its *Rhinegold* - and its sequels - have been seen it will be hard to diagnose with what intention this sacrifice has been made.

Children of the would-be revolution

Andrew Hislop

DAVID EDGAR
Maydays
Barbican Theatre

"The first time as tragedy; the second time as farce" - in David Edgar's play, *Maydays*, the young American is posed radical politics. This famous qualification by Marx of Hegel's view of history repeating itself, he does so in a play about the young '68 radicals when he comes to "share" his daughter's grief after her boyfriend, Carl, a lumbar in the Santa Barbara division of the Vietnam, has accidentally, and off-stage, blown himself up in a Californian US Air Force base.

Edgar has taken Marx's remark to heart - or at least to head. *Maydays* is a dramatic re-run of history which without quite becoming a farce, plays up the comic and avoids tragedy - even the glib sense. Clark's self-will in absentia seems less a moment for great sadness than a confirmation that the goals which the '68 extreme left were often beat at achieving were own goals. And the

only representative of British political terrorism in *Maydays* - a member of the Angry Brigade - has no demonic faith in explosives but a brief comic love-hate relationship with a Roneo machine before he is mercilessly given, again off-stage, ten years for provocative duplication. Even when we are taken to the Gung in dramatic counterpoint to the domestic political farrago we are given jokes: "Adam and Eve. First communists... No clothes. One apple between them and they thought they were in paradise."

Maydays is a history of defections - from Left to Right and from East to West. The English and political deflection centres on two characters whose lives continually cross as they move step by step from radical activism to right-wing apathy. Jeremy Crowther (John Shrapnell) is a representative of the immediate post-war Communist Party; Martin Glass (Anthony Sher), of the 1960s student Left. More sympathetic to Edgar, though, is the movement of the Russian Pavel Lemmonov from Soviet soldier in Hungary in 1956 to persecuted dissident and political exile who refuses to become a stooge of the British New Right; and that of Amanda (Alison Steadman) from the emotionally arid. Trot to feeling and thinking - Greenham Common protest.

That the stories of these defections are told with much humour is a reflection, however, not of a frivolous cynicism but of the very seriousness of Edgar's commitment, as a left-wing writer, to the use of theatre as a form of political expression. In the flesh. Drama for him, offers the opportunity of producing a political "essay" which is able to explore "the subjective responses" of individuals - a factor which, he thinks, radical socialism has, to its cost, ignored for too long. And, to help its message get through, it can be accompanied, as in the case of *Maydays*, with an array of supportive "software" - interviews, articles, etc. - to punch out the points more clearly. Unfortunately, the play upstages the political intentions - at least in Ron Daniels's production. A analysis made flesh is liable to go the

way of all flesh; and politics given body in the theatre is even more at the mercy of its audience than the theatrical artist would-be saviours of the body politic.

Edgar himself has written perceptively (7/5, September 10, 1982) about the changing response of audiences to political drama in the 1960s and 1970s: how the political consensus between play-makers and their audiences was not sustained and the attitude of many middle-class playgoers to radical theatre changed "from one of nervous acquiescence to one of impatient rejection". Some radical playwrights chose to assault their incompunct audience. Edgar in *Maydays* has chosen to woo them to take them with him. The audience appeared entertained and even amused, but not completely taken in by the excellently acted and intelligent play produced for his particular ride.

This is not surprising since Edgar ignores almost completely what is of direct political concern to the majority of his audience - parliamentary democracy. Most of them have always rejected as silly and/or dangerous the antics of the extreme left (if not always their work in the theatre) and the authoritarianism of the right of the Tory party while admiring the courage of East European dissidents. Edgar's humorous, and, at times, glibly-ridden reappraisal of the past would be revolutionary, though based on intimate inside knowledge; only provides more ammunition to those who mock from without; and thus undermines his avowed intention to give a greater understanding of why people protested, albeit futilely or absurdly, in order to cherish what he still regards as worthwhile radical protest - nuclear disarmament, women's and black rights, etc. *Maydays* will encourage most of its audience to engage with its political relevance, but to retain a smug distance from it.

This distancing is reinforced by Edgar's choice of dramatic form. (Though often cleverly engineered and greatly extended by the RSC's

resources of actors and machinery, the fringe theatre techniques of rapid juxtapositions of time and place are deftly at satirically pointing out the ironies of changed positions than giving a profound subjective understanding of individual motivation. When two actors do adopt to make long impassioned speeches they seem to be taken out of the play, rather than us into their characters. But then, Edgar's new concern for human individualism is due to his interest in playing politics not God - a role which, anyway, he has already essayed in the Bradford ice-cream production of Howard Brontón's *Scott of the Antarctic*.

The text of David Edgar's play *Maydays* is now available as part of Methuen's "Theatretexts" series (70pp. Paperback £1.0 413 54180 0). Other recent titles in the series, which aims to "close the gap between the appearance of a new work in the theatre and its publication in script form", are a volume of three plays, winners of the Verity Bargeto Award for 1983, *Shore* by Tony Crazee, *Lunch Girls* by Ron Hart and *The Shelter* by Johnnie Quarrell (71pp. £2.95. 0 413 53850 8). *The Genius* by Howard Brontón (48pp. £1.95. 0 413 54650 0) and *The Improvised Play: The Work of Mike Leigh* (96pp. £3.50. 0 413 50440 9). Future publications will include *Edward Bond's Dances and Choruses from After the Assassinations* (48pp. £1.95. 0 413 54700 0), Caryl Churchill's *Topographics* (£1.95. 0 413 54910 0), two plays by Edgar White, *The Nine Nights and Ritual by Water* (0 413 54520 2) and Stephen Lowe's adaptation of Robert Tressalt's *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropist*.

In its parallel series of play texts Faber and Faber has recently published *Master Class* by David Pownall (72pp. Paperback £3.50. 0 571 13230 8). *The Dog It Was That Died and Other Plays* by Tom Stoppard, seven radio plays including *The Dislocation of Dominic Boot* (M 18 for Moon Among other Things) (18pp. £2.95. 571 13183 2) and *Salmon Year of the Cat* by David Hare (77pp. £3.50. 0 571 11980 8).

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(1186)

Accentuating the negative

Roger Moss

DANIEL A. HARRIS

Inspirations Unbidden: The "Terrible Sonnets" of Gerard Manley Hopkins
174pp. University of California Press. £16.50.
0 520 04539 4

The six poems written by Gerard Manley Hopkins in Dublin during 1885, known as the "terrible sonnets", present a formidable problem. Not only is their language as difficult as anything that Hopkins wrote; they also stand in unmistakable contrast to the rest of his work, and are puzzlingly at odds with the strict aims for poetry which had allowed him, fitfully, to square his writing with his vocation. Nothing, or nothing very much, in the interior landscapes of these sonnets suggests the saving presence of Christ which had been the recurrent disco very of his earlier poetry. They are a protest, against despair and excessive self-condemnation, but also against a God who had forsaken the poet, against a vocation within which he could not succeed, and even against the circumstances which had prevented him from the wholehearted pursuit of his art. It is this last turn of the screw—the one that identifies the conflict between Hopkins as a Jesuit and Hopkins as a poet—that distinguishes the "terrible sonnets" from the painful

meditations of Donne or Herbert, or of the Psalmist, and gives them a unique pathos. It is also this that raises the profoundest questions about what is entailed in the putting of protest and pain into lyric form.

The central endeavour of Daniel Harris's study, *Inspirations Unbidden*, in no way reduces the scale of the problem. If anything, it is magnified in proportion to the importance that Harris claims for the sonnets, both in relation to Hopkins's oeuvre and, beyond this, to the development of a Victorian poetry. Harris is consistently critical of commentators who have sought to muffle the extreme voice of the poems. To their claims of a restorative sequence within the six sonnets, he offers textual evidence (and provides an appendix with facsimiles, transcripts and variant readings) to show that Hopkins wrote the bleakest conclusion of all, the last tercet of "To seem the stranger", last of all. Since this hardly constitutes a revised sequence, and since Harris finally concedes that the accepted sequence is indeed Hopkins's own—but a "mask" of the sonnets' real feelings rather than a pattern of redemption—it may be doubted whether the argument warrants a chapter. But it is only one item in Harris's rebuttal of cosier interpretations.

The idea of such a mask is crucial to the continuing argument. The main claim of the study is that in the "terrible

sonnets" the two stabilizing bases of the earlier poetry—the observation of nature, influenced by Ruskin, and the form of meditation, drawn from St Ignatius—are abandoned, parodied or aborted. Imagery and structure, similarly, are filled, dysfunctional versions of what had once worked. If traces of them are to be found at all, Harris characterizes these as the mere rhetoric of resolution, not the achievement of it, as in the earlier poetry.

This implied commitment to a "negative poetics" in Harris's treatment of the sonnets is generally convincing, and it promises a subtle answer to critics more easily satisfied. Harris patiently ransacks the sonnets themselves, the drafts, notebooks, correspondence and sermons, as well as the rest of the oeuvre, to suggest that everywhere—or nearly everywhere, for again the textual evidence is not as unanimous as it might be—Hopkins accentuates a negative message in the poetry which is not as challengingly expressed elsewhere.

But the delineation of a negative poetics is a risky business, requiring the critic to argue for the significance of things that are absent. I have already suggested that Harris overstates his textual argument, and two larger parts of his interpretative argument similarly fail to convince. The language of bloodless pain, bitterness, alternating lassitude and violence, is vividly present throughout the sonnets. But it

does not add up to the image of huddled deformity and degeneration that Harris rightly identifies in other Victorian and post-Victorian poetry, and which he has over-schematically imposed upon the imagery here. Similarly, the shifts in personal pronouns in Hopkins's poetry do not make the case for a lost vocation that Harris suggests in the last chapter.

This over-stretching of the argument is carried into the readings of individual poems. References to the Antichrist in "As kingfishers catch fire", to Odysseus in "No worst", and, most damningly—because Harris sees it as the climactic assertion of the sonnets, and so as the climax of his argument—to a parody of the Virgin and of incarnation in just half a line from "To seem the stranger": these come too fast, and are drawn from tonal stilted and external a range of symbolism, to be entirely persuasive. Instructive readings of "Pied Beauty", "Spring and Fall" and "Carion Comfort" do not entirely make up for such unreliability.

This striving to be distinctive mars what is in many ways an exciting book. But there is more than that; there is also a striving to be definitive, to hammer home an unequivocally negative reading, which sits oddly with the undeniable difficulty and ambiguity of the poems. It is as if, in his enthusiasm for an inharmonious reading, Harris has forgotten that such

a challenge to conventions of thought and expression must also entail some complexity. This ultimately prevents him from offering any substantial reason for the existence of such a challenge in poetic form. The idea may be "unbidden", but they are the "inspirations", and it is a significant weakness of Harris's account that it reduces the "inspiration" in his title to mere verbal craft. Yet the failures in coherence that Harris identifies in the "terrible sonnets" are not only failures, they are also leaps of faith, which Hopkins pins his slim hope on. Indeed, the coherence that Harris identifies in the earlier poetry is not only that, it is also a methodological exact contemporaries, amplifies the message behind the poet's vision. While the ambiguity of the "terrible sonnets" may not be something to be welcomed with open arms, it may nevertheless be the sign of an authenticity that is sometimes lacking in the earlier verse.

In the very intensity with which Hopkins's later poems can be read, and partially re-envisioned by each reader, there is a paradox: one that refutes Hopkins's message of failure even while it accepts his poetic form. In this way, a negative poetics can acquire positive value, and Harris's insistence that the reader must be harsher to himself than even poor Hopkins was demands a poet's answer: "leave comfort root-room".

It can be made for many poems besides Brownings.

Even more would I urge poets, of whatever schools and persuasions, to make the necessary effort and find Attridge's text with all deliberate speed. *The Rhythms of English Poetry* is a magisterial achievement, magisterial in the sense both of magister and magistrate, leader and law-giver. The rules of English metrical verse could not be more clearly expounded. Not that Attridge's syllabus, fully mastered, will equip one at once to write better poetry, but it will help one acquire a greater facility in re-writing. Because he dispenses with the terminology of classical prosody and because he lays the foundation of his own system so carefully, Attridge avoids both the Scylla of pedantry and the Charybdis of structuralist obscurantism. One might propose alternatives to some of his terms, but one could not improve on his system. The tools will improve in the business of poetry; they possess them.

everyday language and, thereby, to sustain a higher degree of tension between meaning and melody.

I would like, in particular, to commend Attridge's book to non-professional readers who are willing to give more than a casual attention to metrical verse. In a final chapter in which Attridge demonstrates, on various texts, the use of his "set of newly-designed tools", he writes: "Few poets demand as much attention to the use of metre as Browning does, and probably not many readers are willing to give it. It must be realised that what is at stake is not some abstract notion of metrical correctness, but the only way in which the close but tempestuous relationship between metre and speech rhythm in Browning's verse can be properly appreciated and, more importantly, fully felt."

Attridge's analysis of a stanza from "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" entirely substantiates that claim—and

Getting it taped

Kateryna Arthur

EUGENE R. KINTGEN

The Perception of Poetry
269pp. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Distributed by International Book Distributors. £15.75.
0 253 34345 3

Eugene R. Kintgen's stated aim is ambitious: "to discover in more detail what readers actually do while reading". His brief survey, at the beginning of *The Perception of Poetry*, of the work of others who have made the attempt (notably I. A. Richards, Jonathan Culler and Stanley Fish) ends with the charge that "each manages to shift attention from the mind meeting the text to something else—the actual experience of reading is neglected". His book is, consequently, devoted to the hunting down of this actual experience.

Kintgen's approach is simple and practical: "He has chosen to study a group of readers (selected graduate students from his own university, English department) and their moment-by-moment accounts of their reading of three poems. More than half of the book is devoted to reproducing and analysing readings of one poem, Shakespeare's Sonnet 94. Kintgen's

most obvious precursor is I. A. Richards, who, in *Practical Criticism*, analysed students' responses to poetry more than half a century ago. But unlike Richards, Kintgen does not attempt to conceal the authorship of the poetry, nor does he discourage secondary reading. He is interested in process rather than result.

The tape-recorder plays a crucial role in Kintgen's investigation. His students are asked to try to verbalize everything they do in coming to "a complete understanding" of each poem, and the transcriptions of their tapes are reproduced in full, some of them analysed in great detail. They make tedious reading.

Well, I feel much better about what I did with this poem, better than I did about the other one, the last one, um... I wish I could remember what the great critical problem with this poem was, what I um... well because then I could work on figuring it out.

A more serious problem is whether tape-recording can provide access to thought processes as they occur during or even after reading. Kintgen clearly believes that it can come closer to doing so than any other procedure, but he briefly acknowledges the likelihood of some "interference" in the process of converting thought to speech. Kintgen simply reinforces his initial implicit assumption that mental processes are

"there" and can be reported, however imperfectly, by speech. He does not consider the possibility that the shapes thought as much as thought shapes speech, or in what sense the notivity of any kind is convertible into words. To dismiss the possibility of "simultaneous verbalization" is merely to underestimate the complexity of the relationship between thought and speech.

In Samuel Beckett's play *Quad*, Krapp plays his old tapes to himself to reacquaint fragments of past experience. All that he actually hears are his own stammering recaptures of the past. In his attempt to recover the actual experience of reading, Kintgen comes up against precisely the same problem.

How to Enjoy Poetry by Vernon Sennell (160pp. Piatkus. £3.95. 0 25128 143 5) is a survey of different types of verse. Its aims are to give readers' understanding of poetry, to increase their enjoyment of it, and finally, to facilitate the efforts of those who wish to write it. In respect of the last mentioned, Mr. Sennell advises some elementary advice: "Don't discuss narrative and incident in poetry. The poet's art is in the changing face of poetry." The book is a brief, free commandment of reading and index containing names of poets and verses discussed in the text.

ART

ENRIQUETA HARRIS

Velázquez
240pp. Oxford: Phaidon. £27.50.
0 7146 2231 0

"Had Velázquez remained in Seville, instead of moving to Madrid, he would no doubt have won fame as a religious painter instead of as a master of portraiture," writes Enriqueta Harris in her long-awaited monograph. Had he remained in the city of his birth he would have had to rival there his two exact contemporaries, Zurbarán and Cano, the former to many modern eyes being of no less genius than Velázquez. We might have had more in the vein of his "Adoration of the Magi" (1619) and of his devotional images for the Convent of the Shod Carmelites. Fortunately for us—and for Philip IV, the royal family and the Spanish court, not to speak of the Pamphilus pope and other clients in July—the star pupil of Pacheco was called to the King's service in 1623; and so he happily remained, rising by degrees to the exalted office of Palace Chamberlain eight years before his death in 1660. Legend has it that the blooded Cross of Santiago superimposed on the black dress in which he portrayed himself portraying King Philip and Queen Mariana in "Las Meninas" was added by the sovereign himself in honour of the newly made Knight. But, if there be truth in the legend, this hard-won badge of nobility would perplex art historians about how, elsewhere, to distinguish the work of the royal hand from that of the by then exhausted courtier.

In a book evidently intended by an experienced scholar to be relished by a wide public, and as a replacement for R. A. M. Stevenson's monograph of 1895 which was re-issued in 1962, partly in default of something fresh, it is understandable that Harris has shied away from a catalogue raisonné. The table of authentic works, however, cannot be dauntingly long, because of the ferocity of Velázquez's and his slow pace to complete commissions, and because of the mounting demands of his palatine duties, especially as a counsellor, collector and adviser on ceremonial losses of his early *bodegones* of later portraits. Yet it is teasing, and not least for English-speaking readers (for whom the book is modestly appended not only a translation of Pacheco's published manuscript, but also the first full text in English of Palomino), to withhold her views on paintings immediately relevant to those discussed by her. Does she, for example, accept as authentic the full-size version at Knole of the six-year-old "Infante Baltasar Carlos as Huntsman"; or the full version in the Metropolitan Museum (bought as a *modello*) of "Charles on Horseback"? Not every version of an authentic Velázquez to the 1630s onwards has to be credited to assistants, as she rightly credits the full-length at Hampton Court of "Philip IV", "Queen Isabel", and the "Infanta Baltasar Carlos", which went to Whitehall in diplomatic exchange for Stuart portraits from Van Dyck's studio. It is regretted that Harris declines the Grosvenor Estate's version of "Baltasar Carlos in the Hunting School" as a masterpiece, and that she identifies the Wallace Collection picture as a copy by Mazo. She is certain, almost, that the Apuleian "Innocent X" is the master's work, described by the Nuncio in Madrid as "very like" the sitter (it is, indeed, a very like, full-length portrait, and much copied, full-length portrait, remaining in Rome. Indeed, the Apuleian House painting, in London, which was the survey of the picture, according to Palomino, brought home to the painter in 1631. One cannot but wish for more insights not only into the painter's various adaptations and his principal assistants, but also into the painter's own personality, and into the changing face of poetry.

The book is a brief, free commandment of reading and index containing names of poets and verses discussed in the text.

The features of royalty

Michael Jaffé

Palomino, but as reliable, is no light task. Velázquez became a professional courtier, but unlike Rubens, not an amateur in diplomacy. Unlike Van Dyck, he left no sketchbook records of his artistic interests; although, like Van Dyck, he presumably kept some, not least during his crucial first visit to Italy of 1629-31. Through other drawings we can scarcely know him; and the study for the Head of Cardinal Borja, drawn *ad vivum* in 1643-45, is properly considered an autograph. Yet he must have drawn many "readymades" some dozen years earlier in Rome, advancing towards those companion portraits which he composed of men full-length, "Apollo in the Forge of Vulcan" and "Joseph's blood-stained coat brought to Jacob". Of letters we

rival in brushwork as well as in dramatic narrative, the fecundity of Rubens's decoration of the Torre della Parada. For it was to Rubens and his studio, rather than to Velázquez, that Philip IV entrusted, through the offices of the Cardinal-Infante in Brussels, the main part of the decoration, by mythologies and hunting scenes, of that refurbished lodge outside Madrid. Harris acknowledges that Rubens's approbation and encouragement were of critical importance to the younger man while the two painters were much together in 1629-31. She is aware that Velázquez may have relied on a Rubens portrait of Spinola for his own likeness of the commander accepting "The Surrender of Breda", much as Rubens had relied on Velázquez for the likeness of

the middleground and distance finished by Spinola, the foreground nearly finished by himself? There survives in the Fitzwilliam Museum a drawing of the Rubens figures, a pastiche attributable to Erasmus Quellinus; and there may have been other more complete records made available to so favoured a person as Velázquez. How else should we explain the highly suggestive similarities in the relation of a foreground frieze, captains, grooms and horses grouped so as to focus conversation between two of the leaders, of a middle-ground thronged with men-at-arms, "Las lanzas" conspicuous at the right, and of a long and broad vista of landscape troubled by siege warfare, a north-western European landscape such as Velázquez

the caption to "The Calling of Saint Matthew" she refers to this *lateral* in the Cappella Contarelli as an altarpiece which had to be repainted. Secondly, about "Los Borrachos", she writes that "the figure of Bacchus is even more naturalistically portrayed than that of Caravaggio's *Bacchus*". But Velázquez owes far more, his Bacchus included, to the engraving of 1596 after Goltzius, which she illustrates; and his god seated on the wine barrel indicates that he was also aware of the Ammao oodcut (ignored by writers on Caravaggio) which Caravaggio had artfully recreated in his own image.

When she comes to her subject's most sublime achievements, Harris's touch is deft—the Apuleian House "Water Seller", the only work painted in Seville of which there is record in Velázquez's lifetime; the "Toilet of Venus" from Rokeby, "the only known Spanish painting of its kind before Goya"; the fulgurous grandeur of "Innocent X", which Reynolds called "one of the first portraits in the world"; the vitality and compassion in his menagerie of dwarfs and buffoons; the shimmering tenderness with which the infancy of the "Infanta Margarita" is repeated, and of the "Infante Philip Prosper" once and for all, are immortalized. And of "Las Meninas", since Palomino, "the most illustrious" of his works, she modestly and sensibly rejects attempts to elicit hidden significance from a peerless amalgam of court portraiture, self-portraiture, and involvement of every beholder.

The appropriate modesty of her personal response, as well as the controlled passion which comes of a lifetime of devotion to her subject, will win new friends for the art of Velázquez and refresh old ones. The details reproduced in colour will help this, although rather many of the complete colour plates, and even some in black-and-white, will not. It was bad luck that the book was published before "Monsieur Camille Mousini" could be cleared for the National Trust; but for the portraits of royal huntsmen destined for the Torre, that of "Philip IV" is notably less successful in reproduction than that of the "Cardinal-Infante" and of the "Infante Philip Prosper". The representation of the "Innocent X" the representation of a "St. Philip Neri" hanging on the wall in the background cannot be described, while the diagram to recall the "hang" in the Salon de Reinos of the Buen Retiro is all but illegible. Are the publishers asking forgiveness?

The canon call for Velázquez is reserved by Enriqueta Harris for her conclusion: "Not looking at his oeuvre as a whole, do we have any difficulty in seeing that he stands with Rembrandt as one of the two great painters of the age". The paragon is too far-fetched to be argued, Rubenists and Poussinists can only gape, as well as those who see how Van Dyck is still underrated. But her book, up to this flourish, reads as good and sober advocacy.



"Los Muscos" an early (c 1617) *bodegón* by Velázquez; it is reproduced from Spanish Genre Painting in the Seventeenth Century by Marianne Harsanyi-Tinkler (283pp Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó £24.80 963 03 2818 5).

have only two by his hand, but neither can count as ones written from Italy, although he must have written letters, either to the King or to Olivares, or to his own family.

Unlike Carl Justi, author of the classic *Velázquez and his Times*, who tried to stimulate, if not to assuage, public interest in the first Italian journey with "Das Tagebuch des Velázquez" (1906), Enriqueta Harris eschews any invention. She may not, however, have choked speculation about what really passed between Velázquez and Salvador Rosa in the conversation reported by Boschini to have taken place in Rome in 1650. Asked if he did not think Raphael the best of painters, Velázquez is said to have replied that he did not like him at all; and that he found in Venice, "the good and beautiful, I give first place to the painters and Titian is the standard-bearer". Such admiration, which he shared with Rubens, for the portraits of Titian, manifested itself in the two versions of "Innocent X".

The disciplined author shuns fancy. Her discrimination and perception, commendably fair to previous historians, are best enjoyed when, in a few sentences, she plots the subtle development from Velázquez's earliest extant portrait of "Philip IV", dressed in black (Prado), as a callow prince, c. 1626, to the last known (National Gallery), in which only the head, in autograph, and shows, with no less convincing versatility, the ageing, nerve-racked monarch in 1656 or 57; or when she plots the more spectacular development in composing by allusion the "House of Merits and Mary" (1618) — one of two surviving *bodegones* displaying a religious theme in the manner available to the young Sevillean through engravings after Aertsen to the Prado's "Fable of Arachne" ("Las Hilanderas") (1656-8) which is an exercise brilliant enough to

Olivares to be modelled for engraving in a cartouche. Harris is equally aware of the limits of what the Velázquez "Coronation of the Virgin" (c 1640) owes formally to the engraving of this only one oil sketch by Rubens. "The Fable of Arachne" is illustrated, apparently because the large canvas painted from it for the Torre is lost, and also because Harris wishes to emphasize the contrast between Rubens's predilection for violent action, and Velázquez's more veiled, less assertive approach to dramatic situations; she does not take up Pevsner's repeated suggestion that Rubens's handling of paint excited, even liberated Velázquez.

Desiring to represent Velázquez as too individual to succumb to Rubens's art, Harris insists that any resemblance to "The Meeting of the two Ferdinands at Nordlingen" which "The Surrender of Breda", Velázquez's solitary essay in the depiction of an event in modern history, may have, can only be fortuitous. But she overlooks "The Siege of Caen" in Göteborg, which was part of the never completed Henri IV series intended for the Luxembourg. Rubens was planning these decorations just before he went to Madrid, where he met Velázquez; he can be assumed to have talked of the project to a fellow painter whom, according to Pacheco, he admired and who was in no sense a rival. After the project was abandoned in 1631, he may well have continued to correspond with Velázquez, keeping in touch with Madrid and its affairs, and learning how Velázquez fared in the Italian cities. When, in 1634, Velázquez was confronted with what was for him a novel and peculiarly Rubensian task, he might well have consulted not merely a Rubens likeness of Spinola, but also Rubens's advice on treating the Breda theme. Could he not have seen a drawing after the Göteborg painting, which Rubens had set aside,

never saw for himself?

Harris seems on surer ground in comparing portraits of the same sitters by Rubens and Velázquez, or by Van Dyck and Velázquez. She rarely stumbles; but she is no countrywoman if she really thinks that, in "Mercury and Argus" in "lying" behind the "crouching" Mercury and the sleeping Argus — for the cow patently and patently stands below the rock clambering sword in hand — rural cunning in siege warfare. Twice Harris gets into needless difficulties over paintings by Caravaggio, despite her strength on the importance of Rubens's Caravaggism for Velázquez. First, in

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